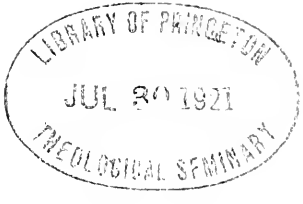
FOR PULPIT AND PLATFORM

A HANDBOOK OF PREPARATION

JOHN M. ENGLISH



FOR PULPIT AND PLATFORM

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FOR

PULPIT AND PLATFORM

A HANDBOOK ON PREPARATION

BY

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PREFACE

NUMEROUS works on public religious discourse have been published that present the subject with minuteness and elaboration. There seems to be a place for a book that sets forth the essentials of effective speech in a less amplified form, for use by busy pastors, by speakers on various kinds of religious topics, and as a book of reference for students in theological schools. With slight change in phraseology the principles involved are equally applicable to those who wish to express their thoughts in an ordered and persuasive way, on any sort of subject. The author trusts that in the choice of materials and in the method of their presentation the work will be found to be practically adapted to the foregoing ends.

With the spread of democracy, public speaking will be more widely practiced in the immediate future, and it is imperative that it shall be effective. If this handbook shall prove to be of service in furthering effectiveness of public speech, the purpose of the author in its publication will be achieved.

The Appendix is added in order that the principles contained in the book may have the practical enforcement of the precept and the example of those especially skilled in addressing their fellow men.

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FOR PULPIT AND PLATFORM

CHAPTER I

THE GATHERING OF MATERIALS

THE discourses of the best preachers seem to be made easily. There are evidently plenty more where they came from. This is true of such men as South, Barrow, Howe, Robertson, MacLaren, Liddon, Parker, Bushnell, Brooks, Lorimer. The open secret of their success is that they put their strength and time into the toil of collecting suitable materials for discourse. That is to say, they have emphasized general rather than special preparation for preaching. Upon success here hinges largely the effectiveness of a settled ministry. The drain upon such a ministry is very great. It is far in excess of that upon any other class of public speakers. It is a standing wonder with some how any preacher can sustain himself in the same pulpit for a series of years. Some preachers barely hold on; they live in constant dread of the next Sunday, that coming event which casts its shadow before. Not only are they on the rack of perpetual worry and strain in making their

sermons, but they are doomed to a second- or third-rate pulpit success. They are living from hand to mouth, which, in preaching, is to live at a poor dying rate. Now this need not be. A minister ought to have unbroken and abounding joy as a preacher, and he may have, if he is ever gathering rich preaching materials from the wide, fertile field of general study.

It is the object of this chapter to present some of the chief sources from which, and of the methods by which, the preacher may possess himself of an ample stock of subject matter of public discourse.

Success in gathering homiletic material depends largely upon two things: the preacher's *homiletic invention* and *mental concentration.*

By homiletic invention is meant *the aptitude of the mind for discovering materials suitable for preaching.*

The term "invention" frequently, perhaps usually, has a signification other than that just given. Webster's definition of it is: "The exercise of the imagination in selecting a theme, or more commonly in contriving the arrangement of a piece or the method of presenting its parts." Professor Wilkinson says: "Invention in oratory is the process of discovering in things that you know adaptation for the effecting of things that you propose." It is used here in the somewhat deeper and broader sense of discovery in the process of investigation. It is that meaning

of the term intended by Marmontel (quoted by Vinet): "The generality of writers pass and re-pass over mines of gold a thousand times without suspecting their existence. Genius alone has the instinct which gives notice of the riches of the mine as it alone has the power of penetrating into its bowels and drawing thence its treasures"; and by N. J. Burton: "There are two ways of reading; one the memoriter way, the mere gathering up of facts, and the other, the thoughtful, brooding, creative way; the way that finds great subjects all along in the stark events of history, so that they are not stark, but eminently relational and prolific."

Oratorical invention is a species of the creative function of the imagination, as are the mathematical, the scientific, the philosophical, the mechanical, and the historical imagination, that mysterious ability of the mind to see and to state fundamental principles in these various regions of human thinking.

Psychologists have not yet fully explored the depths of this imperial power of the imagination, but the best of them agree that the mere representation to the mind of the materials held in the memory, or the picture-forming quality that adorns discourse with imagery are not its chief functions; but that it is endowed with a penetrative or creative energy, and that this is its crowning glory. Perhaps no man in modern times has been a truer example, in the

scientific sphere, of this quality of the imagination than Lord Kelvin, of whom it has been said that he possessed "that highest of intellectual qualities, the constructive scientific imagination, which 'bodies forth the forms of things unknown,' with such definition and precision that the mechanical faculties work up to the conception as to a visible model."

An essential phase of the penetrating, discovering quality of the mind is called, in the case of the preacher, *spiritual insight.* This is the product of the working of the Holy Spirit in him. Not by a conscious logical process, but through spiritual sympathies, through a spiritually clarified and enlightened imagination, which equals faith, the mind sees the truth as it is in Jesus, and instinctively, as it were, seizes upon the heart of its meaning. (See I. Corinthians, chapter 2.) Spiritual insight, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, is a gift of God in answer to prayer. It is probably true that the men who have this power of spiritual insight in richest degree are the men who, endowed natively with imagination, are most spiritually minded through communion with God — Paul, Spurgeon, MacLaren, Bushnell, Moody, Phillips Brooks. How indispensable, then, is it seen to be that not only in the preparation of a sermon, but also in the gathering of materials in the widest sense, the preacher should, through prayer, receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The second essential in the preacher to the gathering of ample, vital, homiletic materials is *mental concentration* — that complete intellectual self-mastery which will enable him to put himself fully into the task in hand and accomplish it speedily and thoroughly. Dawdling over a task is not only to consume time, which the preacher, while he has all there is of it, and more than he has of almost anything else, should be thoroughly miserly of, but also to do a poor quality of mental work. Dr. Chalmers cultivated this power of concentration to an unusual degree. "Whatever he was prosecuting he was for the time *totus in illo*. His motto might have always been, 'This one thing I do.' Whatever he took up with he could separate from all other things, and he could concentrate himself upon it." He wrote his fourth astronomical discourse, one of the most elaborate and finished of the series, at odds and ends of time amid the distraction of travel and of public meetings, and in rooms filled with talking ministers. Professor Allen says of Phillips Brooks: "He had the capacity for mental concentration, so that the presence of others or the talk going on around him, even an interruption from a caller, was no disturbance or injury to his work." Steven in "The Psychology of a Christian Soul" gives psychological indorsement to this view, "The secret of all highly culti-

vated life is the power of concentrating the attention."

I. The Study of the Bible in Gathering Materials for Public Religious Discourse

The preacher in his quest of homiletic materials is privileged to enter every domain of knowledge. As Cicero said of the secular orator, with equal truth it may be said of the sacred orator: "Every kind of information is of value to him." There is, however, one source of pulpit matter uniquely affluent, one mine of truth quite inexhaustible. It is the Bible. In the best sense, the minister is a man of one book, and that book the Bible. Professor Phelps well says: "No other study is so prolific of the finest quality and variety of homiletic materials as the study of the Scriptures. Once full of them, and with a mind assimilated to their quality, with a speech which holds them at the tongue's end, a preacher need never exhaust himself. He need never rack his brain or roam the streets for something to say, and something to the point. The stream is perennial. It is the river of the water of life."

Two perils beset the preacher in Biblical study; one is that he will study books on the Bible rather than the Bible itself. The other is that in the urgency of the demand of the next Sunday's sermon

he will go to the Bible as a thesaurus of single, isolated texts. That this piecemeal way of using the Bible has been all too prevalent among the ministry there can be no doubt. There is now a decided tendency toward a more excellent method of studying the Scriptures. It is a study of the books of the Bible as continuous compositions pervaded by a single controlling purpose on the part of the writer, and of the entire Bible as containing "an organic and progressive revelation."

What shall be offered in the present chapter is mainly in the line of this larger, truer method of Bible study that is of so vital concern to the preacher in our time.

1. *The Books of the Bible in Their Historic Setting*

The historical method of investigation is now recognized, and justly, as the only scientific method. It is absolutely necessary to a correct and complete understanding of the Bible, and underlies and precedes all other kinds of Bible study.

This method of Bible study is urged on the following grounds: *first*, because the contents of the books of the Bible came through men and bear their impress.

The Bible is, in the best sense, an historical book. In its making it had preëminently to do with living men. Whatever inspiration did for its authors in its inscrutable psychological process, it did not

interfere one whit with the fullest, freest working of their personalities. Their communications, whether by voice or by pen, contain the flavor of their individual characteristics and experiences. Isaiah is in his prophecy; John in his gospel; Peter and Paul in their addresses and letters. You cannot fully understand the product without first knowing something of the human producer and of his environment. Earnest, reverent Bible study to-day is making this more and more manifest.

It is to be borne in mind, moreover, that these human authors of the books of the Bible were, many of them, public men. In order therefore adequately to comprehend their teachings, we must know something of their surroundings. These men were not recluses giving forth their oracles from solitary retirement. They lived in the stir and rush of pressing public affairs. Some of them, the prophets particularly, mingled with leading men and were the statesmen of their day. They were thus practical men of the world. We need but to run over the list of the chief makers of the Bible to verify the foregoing statements. From Moses to Malachi, from Jesus to Paul, they were men of the times.

This method of Bible study is urged: *secondly*, because the main contents of the Bible were delivered to men to help them in the stress of personal, spiritual needs.

The truths of the Bible were lived before they were recorded. They went into character before they went into a book. Indeed, they went into a book because they first went into character, else they would not have been worth putting into a book. The truths of Paul's Epistles, for instance, did service in evangelization and edification prior to his writing them down on parchment. They must have been formulated, more or less, in his own mind in connection with his personal experience of them and the triumph he saw them make in saving men. A knowledge, then, of Paul — of his experience, of the practical aim of his teaching, that which called it forth, and the environment in which that aim was prosecuted — is essential to the completest understanding of the truths he used in the service of his aim.

Besides, the fact that Bible truths were originally used to meet personal, spiritual needs is of prime homiletic significance. The preacher of to-day, like prophet and apostle of old, has as his central aim the building of character and the molding of conduct. By the study of their discourses and writings, his sermons will take on the charactersitics of their communications — concreteness, practicalness, intensity, prominent in the most effective preaching.

Furthermore, the preacher should take into ac-

count the fact that, broadly speaking, the men to whom Bible truth first came and through whom it went forth for severe ethical ends were Orientals. They were men of vivid imagination and of profound feeling; a combination of marked homiletic value to the modern preacher. Professor Phelps has said: "I must believe that it was not without a wise forecast of the world's necessities and an insight into human nature all around, that God ordained that the Bible, which should contain our best models of sanctified culture, should be constructed in the East, and by the inspiration of minds of an eastern stock and discipline, whose imaginative faculty could conceive such a poem as the Song of Solomon, and whose emotive nature could be broken up like the fountains of a great deep."

In view, then, of the foregoing considerations, the preacher needs to make himself familiar with the various elements in the historic setting of the books of the Bible; with the character, the experiences, the surroundings of the writer, and of the readers of a book; with the object of the writing of a book; with whatever will make the contents of a book live again as they lived at the time of their delivery or composition.

2. *The Bible by Books*

This method emphasizes the mastery of the contents of a book of the Bible in the light of the leading aim of its writer. For the Bible is a library rather than a single book.

This telescopic sort of study should accompany the microscopic with grammar and lexicon. The first is essential to the second in order to grasp the exact meaning of capital words and phrases of a book. It calls for much careful reading of the English Bible, that the preacher may get into the atmosphere and appreciate the movement of thought of the book. But few can accomplish these two ends by reading the book in the original Hebrew or Greek.

3. *The Individual Words of the Bible, Especially Those Which Express the Capital Truths of Christianity*

Every great book has its capital words which give it its peculiar significance. This is uniquely true of the Bible. Its contents cannot be mastered apart from the mastery of its capital words. Coleridge has said on the importance of word study: "There are cases in which more knowledge of more value may be conveyed by the history of a word than by the history of a campaign. In order to get the

full sense of a word, we should first present to our minds the visual image that forms its primary meaning." Sanday's "Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans," pages 221–239, furnishes a fine specimen of such study. The following are some of the central words of the Scriptures: law, sin, faith, love, righteousness, flesh, heart, salvation, blood, death, propitiation. In order to derive the largest benefit from such study the Bible should be examined with the aid of the best Commentaries, Lexicons, and Concordances.

4. *Subjects or Doctrines*

This method is closely allied with the study of words, and includes such subjects as Incarnation, Atonement, Repentance, Regeneration, Forgiveness, Prayer, God, Christ, The Holy Spirit. Dale's "Christian Doctrine" is fruit of such study and a good example of it.

This sort of study:

a. Develops the thinking power of preacher and people.

b. Shows the character and the value of the Christian religion.

c. Yields an abundance of the most valuable truths for preaching.

5. *Careful Exegetical Study of Specially Difficult and Crucial Passages of Scripture*

Examples: Matthew xii. 31 sq.; Luke x. 21, 22; Introduction to John's Gospel; Romans iii. 21–26. Galatians iii. 20; Ephesians iii. 14 sq.; Philippians ii. 5 sq.

a: This kind of study is necessary to complete mastery of particular books and of the entire Bible.

b. It stimulates the critical exegetical habit.

c. It strengthens the mind to grapple with difficulties.

d. It secures some of the most valuable preaching materials.

6. *The Comparative Study of the Books of the Bible*

Examples: Genesis and Matthew; Exodus and Matthew; Genesis (especially the record of Abraham) and Luke; Joshua and Acts; Leviticus and Hebrews; Isaiah and Romans; John and Romans; I. Corinthians and Ephesians.

One advantage of this kind of study is the discovery of each Biblical writer's particular viewpoint of truth; for instance, the difference in this respect between John and Paul, or what is known as Biblical Theology.

7. *The Characters of the Bible*

Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Jesus, John, Peter, Paul.

This is a valuable source of homiletic material because:

a. These men were conveyors of truth from God to men.

b. They were men of their times.

c. Their personal characteristics have bearing upon men to-day.

8. *The Addresses of the Bible*

9. *The Conversations of Jesus*

These two contain much of the most valuable material for preaching.

10. *The Sociological Aspects of the Contents of the Bible*

A source of study that is becoming increasingly prominent and is contributing choice materials for the pulpit.

II. History

1. *Church History*

The history of the Church, Jewish and Christian (including the development of Christian Doctrine),

is a fruitful kind of homiletic study. It yields the preacher (*a*) inspiration, from fellowship with a long and distinguished line of workers in realms kindred to his own. How can he become acquainted with the characters and the labors of such men as Polycarp, Justyn Martyr, Origen, Chrysostom, Basil, Augustine, Wicliffe, Luther, Knox, Latimer, Whitefield, John Wesley, Bishop Hannington, John G. Paton, and not be thrilled as he thinks that they and he are in the "goodly fellowship" of coworkers with God; (*b*) mental and volitional quickening from contact with great thinkers and influential personalities; (*c*) intellectual and spiritual poise when he confronts new phases of Christian truth, and, at the same time, keen appreciation of their value if such they have; (*d*) material of a high order for confirmation of divine truth in discourse along the following lines: (1) the high intellectual quality of the central Christian truths in that, for their unfolding, they have required the severest thinking of the first order of minds. For instance, the unfolding of the doctrine of the Trinity (Athanasius, Basil, the two Gregories); of the doctrine of man (Augustine); of the doctrine of justification by faith (Luther); it answers the objection sometimes raised against Christianity that it is not sufficiently recondite to claim the intellectual respect of men of dialectic acumen and ripe culture; (2) its

adaptation to meet the needs of an aroused conscience (Paul, Augustine, Luther); (3) its ability to stir the heroic feelings, to nerve the will to the achieving of noblest deeds, and to build holy character (Jonathan Edwards); (4) its preserving influence upon civilization; (5) material for illustration in preaching. Especially is the history of the Jewish Church valuable for illustrative purposes, in three aspects: its external history; its institutions; its great characters. "I cannot but think that it would be well if we made a much greater use of the history of the Old Testament to illustrate the Gospel of the New. The two have an essential connection with each other, and so they come together with peculiar sympathy and fitness." — PHILLIPS BROOKS.

Dean Farrar has two suggestive articles in the *Homiletic Review* for May and June, 1898, on "How Best to Use Church History in Preaching."

2. *General History*

History is valuable to the preacher in the following respects: "Histories make men wise." — BACON; "Historical study furnishes a first-rate general discipline on reasoning of the practical kind most needed in the affairs of life; it is a prime aid to breadth of view and of sympathy." — ANDREWS; it cultivates the historical imagination; it in-

creases the store of valuable knowledge; it provides a practical demonstration of the wickedness of mankind and of their need of the Christian religion with its peculiar circle of truths; it is an exhibition of the providence of God in preserving the best human institutions. "A study of history teaches us that through the ages there has been a forward ethical and spiritual movement sometimes checked and not continuous in a direct unswerving line, but with a definite, increasing upward tendency." — CLIFFORD. It is, like sacred history, one of the most fruitful sources of material for illustration; "to the public speaker either in the pulpit or on the platform a knowledge of history is indispensable for the illustration of his argument."

III. BIOGRAPHY [1]

"I think I would rather have written a great biography than a great book of any other sort, as I would have rather painted a great portrait than any other kind of picture." — PHILLIPS BROOKS.

Biography ranks very high in its usefulness to the preacher. Its chief value to him is in the following directions:

It is an admirable teacher of human nature. In some respects it outranks the preacher's direct study

[1] Appendix I.

of living men. This is true especially if the biography is pretty full of correspondence, as in Stanley's Arnold, and Prothero's Stanley. The *Independent*, in a review of the life of Charles Loring Brace, said: "He opened himself to his friends in his correspondence as few men have ever done. This is the more remarkable as, in his personal relations, without being distant or cold, he was reserved about himself, certainly not disposed to be free. In his letters all lies open; you read him to the bottom of his heart, in a delightful sincerity which is as free from egotism as the bloom of a rose." Biography emphasizes that most important of lessons for the preacher, viz.: the distinct individuality of every human life. It unveils a man's inner character in the working of his springs of action — the rich region of motives. It exhibits his strength and his weakness, his virtues and his faults, the variety and complexity of his experiences; his surroundings — in a word, whatever makes up a human life as the preacher needs to know it. It develops sympathy with men; it furnishes high incentive to worthy character and achievement. If he did it why may not I try to do it? The illustrations gleaned from biography are among the best for public religious discourse. People are interested in persons. Whatever is drawn from the actual experience of men comes home to a congregation.

In ministerial biography five classes of men should receive special attention:

1. Those who have lived at critical periods in the history of the church. — Paul, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Augustine, Luther, Wesley, Whitefield, Edwards.
2. Those who knew human nature. — Chrysostom, Bunyan, Wesley, James, Spurgeon, Hannington, MacLeod, Lyman Beecher, Henry Ward Beecher, Kirk, Goodell.
3. Quickening thinkers. — Edwards, Robertson, Bushnell.
4. Those who had the art of putting things. — Chrysostom, Bunyan, Robertson, MacLaren, Guthrie, Bushnell, Brooks.
5. Those conspicuously successful in compassing the ends of the ministry. — Baxter, Simeon, Spurgeon, McCheyne, Payson, James, Lyman Beecher, Goodell.

A preacher's reading in biography should take a wide range. The lives of statesmen, orators, politicians, scientists, literary men, artists, ministers, missionaries, and others should secure his attention.

A SELECTED LIST OF BIOGRAPHIES

Missionaries

Francis of Assisi . . . . . Sabatier
Adoniram Judson . . . . . Wayland, Judson

William Carey . . . . . Smith
Alexander Duff . . . . . Smith
David Livingstone . . . . . Blaikie
James Hannington . . . . . Dawson
Robert and Mary Moffat . . . . . Moffat
A. M. Mackay . . . . . Mackay
Joseph Hardy Neesima . . . . . Hardy
Henry Martyn . . . . . Smith, Page
J. G. Paton . . . . . Paton
Coleridge Patteson . . . . . Yonge, Page
Robert Morrison . . . . . Townsend
Samuel A. Crowther . . . . . Page, Partridge
John K. Mackenzie . . . . . Bryson
Griffith John . . . . . Thompson
John Williams . . . . . Ellis, Campbell
Moravian Missions . . . . . Thompson
Great Missionaries of the Church . . . . . Creegan
The New Acts of the Apostles . . . . . Pierson
Diary of a Japanese Convert . . . . . Uchimura
David Brainerd . . . . . Sherwood
John L. Nevius . . . . . Nevius
My Life and Times . . . . . Hamlin

MINISTERS

Chrysostom . . . . . Stephens
Bernard of Clairvaux . . . . . Storrs
John Colet . . . . . Lupton
John Knox . . . . . Taylor
John Bunyan . . . . . Brown
John Howe . . . . . Rogers
Richard Baxter . . . . . Orme
George Whitefield . . . . . Tyerman, Gillies, Belcher
John Wesley . . . . . Tyerman, Winchester

Charles Simeon . . . . . Carus
John Henry Newman . . . . . Barry
F. W. Robertson . . . . . Brooke
Augustus Hare . . . . . Hare
Charles Kingsley . . . . . Kingsley
Samuel Wilberforce . . . . . Wilberforce
Arthur P. Stanley . . . . . Prothero
F. D. Maurice . . . . . Maurice
F. W. Farrar . . . . . Farrar
Murray McCheyne . . . . . Bonar
Norman McLeod . . . . . McLeod
Thomas Chalmers . . . . . Hanna
Thomas Guthrie . . . . . Guthrie
Henry Drummond . . . . . Smith
Christmas Evans . . . . . Hood
Charles H. Spurgeon . . . . Autobiography, Shindler
Joseph Parker . . . . Autobiography, Dawson, Adamson
Robert W. Dale . . . . . Dale
Newman Hall . . . . . Autobiography
Gipsy Smith . . . . . Autobiography
Hugh Price Hughes . . . . . Hughes
Jonathan Edwards . . . . . Allen
Nathaniel Emmons . . . . . Ide, Park
Lyman Beecher . . . . . Beecher
Edward Payson . . . . . Cummings, Parishioner
Edward N. Kirk . . . . . Mears
Austin Phelps . . . . . Phelps
T. L. Cuyler . . . . . Autobiography
C. L. Goodell . . . . . Currier
Horace Bushnell . . . . . Bushnell
Henry Ward Beecher . Beecher and Scoville, Abbott, As His Friends Saw Him
Charles G. Finney . . . . . Autobiography, Wright

Dwight L. Moody . . . . . Moody
Charles Hodge . . . . . Hodge
J. Addison Alexander . . . . . Alexander
James McCosh . . . . . Sloane
John Hall . . . . . Hall
Maltbie D. Babcock . . . . . Robinson
John H. Barrows . . . . . Barrows
Francis Wayland . . . . . Wayland
Baron Stowe . . . . . Stockbridge
Jacob Knapp . . . . . Autobiography
S. H. Cone . . . . . Cone
Barnas Sears . . . . . Hovey
Richard Fuller . . . . . Cathcart
James P. Boyce . . . . . Broadus
John A. Broadus . . . . . Robertson
E. G. Robinson . . . . . Johnson
A. J. Gordon . . . . . Gordon
W. E. Channing . . . . . Channing
E. S. Gannett . . . . . Gannett
J. F. Clarke . . . . . Autobiography
Theodore Parker . . . . . Chadwick
Phillips Brooks . . . . Allen, As His Friends Knew Him
Stephen H. Tyng . . . . . Tyng
Matthew Simpson . . . . . Crooks
Footsteps in a Parish . . . . . Stone
Recollections . . . . . Gladden
John Clifford . . . . . Bateman
A Preacher's Story of His Work . . . . . Rainsford
Alexander MacLaren . . . . . MacLaren
T. T. Munger . . . . . Bacon
A. M. Fairbairn . . . . . Selbie
From Romance to Reality . . . . . Mabie
Edward Judson . . . . . Sears

WRITERS, STATESMEN, LAWYERS, ETC.

Samuel Johnson . . . . . Boswell
Walter Scott . . . . . Lockhart
Thomas B. Macaulay . . . . . Trevelyan
Earl of Shaftesbury . . . . . Hodder
Thomas Arnold . . . . . Stanley
John Stuart Mill . . . . . Autobiography
Alfred Tennyson . . . . . Tennyson
Robert Browning . . . . . Chesterton
John Ruskin . . . Autobiography (Præterita) Harrison
William E. Gladstone . . . . . Morley
Moncure D. Conway . . . . . Autobiography
Napoleon Bonaparte . . . . . Sloane
George Müller . . . . . Pierson, Autobiography
Daniel Webster . . . . . Harvey
Rufus Choate . . . . . Neilson
James Russell Lowell . . . . . Scudder
R. W. Emerson . . . . . Cabot, Holmes
George F. Hoar . . . . . Autobiography
U. S. Grant . . . . . Autobiography
Campaigning with Grant . . . . . Porter
Charles Loring Brace . . . . . Brace
Henry Clay Trumbull . . . . . Howard
Memories of Yale Life and Men . . . . . Dwight
Andrew D. White . . . . . Autobiography
The Making of An American, An Autobiography . . . Riis
Up from Slavery. An Autobiography . . . Washington
Studies in Contemporary Biography . . . . . Bryce
English Men of Letters Series . . . . . Morley
American Men of Letters Series . . . . . Warner
Men of the Bible Series . . . . . Perowne
American Statesmen . . . . . Morse

American Religious Leaders
An American Citizen; Life of W. H. Baldwin, Jr. . Brooks
Nathaniel Hawthorne . . . . . Hawthorne
A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson . . . . . Cabot
Reminiscences . . . . . Angell
The Life of John Bright . . . . . Trevelyan
Thomas B. Reed . . . . . McCall
Charles Francis Adams . . . . . Autobiography
Samuel Billings Capen . . . . . Hawkins

IV. Poetry

Professor Thayer, the eminent New Testament exegete in the Harvard Divinity School, used strongly to advise every preacher to study poetry extensively. There are several good reasons why the preacher should study poetry: It contains the sublimest thoughts of the human mind — thoughts that are the fruit of the understanding "aërated by the imagination," which makes them "so thoroughly cosmopolitan"; it cultivates the esthetic taste, especially by the rhythm of its language. This is of marked value to the preacher because of the beauty of the Christian religion, of which he is a minister; love, faith, hope, peace, joy, humility, self-sacrifice — the content of the Christian character — are beautiful. "Poetry is simply the most beautiful, impressive, and widely effective mode of saying things, and hence its importance." — M. Arnold. It cultivates the imagination; it

explores and unfolds the depths and complexity of human nature. This is preëminently true of the dramatic poetry of Shakespeare. What phase of human nature has escaped his marvelous insight? In furnishing the preacher with a knowledge of men he stands next to the Bible — the incomparable source of insight into the workings of the human heart; it stirs the deepest, tenderest, human emotions; it is valuable for occasional quotation. The preacher should quote poetry sparingly, briefly, aptly. If quoted extensively it becomes a patch upon discourse, although a brilliant one, instead of the bloom on the cheek of the peach. The poets of greatest value to the preacher are: Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning.

V. Fiction

Novels of the best grade are excellent teachers of psychology, since they portray human love, human motives, and human conduct in their most subtle and tangled workings. In this respect such writers as Nathaniel Hawthorne and George Eliot are particularly helpful to the preacher; a novel of the highest rank also offers a good training for the imagination, the taste, and style. It is valuable for occasional brief quotation. Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, George Eliot, Hawthorne, still remain the best novelists for the Christian preacher.

VI. Orations of Effective Speakers

Professor Wilkinson says of these: "Among all the works of the mind of man, no other class of productions will aid you so directly and so richly to this end, namely, the knowledge which concerns the constitution and the habit of the human heart, as that 'library of eloquence and reason' which is made up of the surviving spoken words of first-rate orators."

The preacher addresses assemblies of men, and these have a character all their own. These orations were delivered usually to large audiences, and often with a persuasive aim. The critical study, therefore, of the masters of secular speech, as to method, style, facts, incidents, references, pithy sayings, etc., is valuable in yielding to the preacher a knowledge of men as they conduct themselves in assemblies, and the most effective ways of reaching them through public address. The best sermons should be studied in the same way and for the same purposes.

Goodrich's "English Eloquence and Debate," though an old book, is especially helpful in the analysis of effective public speaking.

VII. Newspapers and Periodicals

Newspapers and periodicals, secular and religious, of the highest grade, reflect the world in which the

preacher lives and to which he ministers. They are of increasing value to him. They often contain the most practical and suggestive material that gets into print, and most of which never appears in book form. The *New York Times*, for instance, is a library in itself. Such a periodical as the *Hibbert Journal* and the other leading magazines of England and America are of prime value to the modern preacher. The best missionary periodicals, as showing the spread and influence of the Christian religion in its evangelistic, educational, and social features, should have large place in a preacher's reading.

To the foregoing range of study could well be added essays, books of travel, scientific and philosophical works, works on art, and art itself, as the preacher has opportunity to study paintings and sculpture.

VIII. The Study of Nature

That is, not from a scientific point of view, but as the natural world falls under the eye of a thoughtful, appreciative observer. Its value is twofold.

1. *It beautifies the mind*

Beauty predominates in the world of nature over sublimity. Beauty is its outstanding quality — the beauty of plant and tree, of color, of sky. Professor Park has said: "Never lose an opportunity for

seeing anything beautiful. Beauty is God's handwriting, a wayside sacrament. The reason for noticing the beauties of nature and art is that they make the soul beautiful, and thus enable it to combine the graces of thought with graces of language."

Canon Mozley's "Sermon on Nature; the Awakening of the Modern Mind to the Beauty of Nature," in his University Sermons, is a valuable aid to the preacher.

2. *Its illustrative material*

This is owing to the close analogy between the natural world and the spiritual world. Professor Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" may receive the condemnation of expert scientists, but it is very suggestive to the Christian preacher. The Book that furnishes him his message richly abounds in the use of illustrations from the natural world; notably, Job, the Psalms, the Prophets, and Jesus. Illustrations from nature seem to be endowed with the quality of bodying forth, making visible and tangible, as it were, the unseen spiritual truths of the Christian religion, and of Christian character. As examples of this, note the sublime theophany of the 18th Psalm, verses 7–16, God's deliverance of his servant from the power of evil and of all earthly foes, and Goldsmith's portrayal of the calm peace and heavenly sublimity of the village pastor, in the

"Deserted Village," which contains, as some think, one of the finest similes in the English language.

"His ready smile a parent's warmth expresst,
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distresst,
To them his heart, his love, his grief were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

CHAPTER II

THE ENRICHING OF THE MENTAL LIFE

As the preacher surveys the scope of study that has been suggested in the preceding chapter and that he is expected to prosecute, it is easy for him to become confused and discouraged. He may well ask himself: In the midst of the constant pressure of the multiform duties of a modern pastorate how can I command time for such general study? Where shall I begin, what shall I include, and how shall I do it? The general answer is that he is not presumed to pursue more than one or two courses of study at a time. Each preacher is to make a wise selection that will meet his particular needs at a given stage of his ministry. The present chapter is intended to offer encouragement and suggestions to busy ministers as students of books. Every preacher is the architect of his own fortune. He can become what, under God, he is determined to become. The ministry is full of men who have not failed, but who have not achieved all that they could and ought to have achieved. They have not been willing to pay the price of hard, unremitting toil. They have

been second rate in their ability and in their success, whereas they should have been first rate and could have been. No man has achieved the summit of usefulness, no matter how great his native gifts, apart from severe labor.[1]

I. Incentives to the Enriching of the Mental Life

1. The Bible, which the preacher especially studies, and from which he draws his message, is the greatest mental fertilizer.

(1) It contains the regnant ideas of the Christian religion. And they are the greatest ideas that have entered the human mind.

(2) They are expressed through virile minds, and partake of their mental vitality. Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jesus, Paul.

(3) The Bible contains in its literary expression the best intellectual qualities of style — clearness, conciseness, exactness.

2. The preacher's period of study covers his lifetime. When he has been graduated from the school and begins the work of his public life, he has not finished his education; he has but begun it. Schopenhauer is reported to have said, "All that a man learns at the university is what he is to learn afterwards." This is true even to-day, when the colleges

[1] Appendix II.

offer so many elective courses that are so largely informational rather than disciplinary.

President Francis Wayland used to affirm that all that he had accomplished in life was by "days' works." And Jules Payot has remarked, "A little is enough for each day if each day accomplishes that little." The busy preacher is ever to remember that to-morrow is another day. The patience of the men who write histories and novels and poetry, like Gibbon, Thackeray, Dickens, Tennyson, and Browning, may well be commended to the Christian preacher. These men made constant and wide use of the passing days and hours. They were satisfied to do a little at a time. The preacher can, if he will. All the time there is is his. And he is free to command his time as few men are. He is left largely to himself as to the use he shall make of it. Dean Church, himself a noble example of his precept, says: "A clergyman ought to be a student — a reader and a thinker — to the very end. 'I am still learning,' said the greatest of artists — Michelangelo — in his old age of fame. Nor if there is the will, the habit of self-command, is that incompatible with a very busy ministry. At least his own great subject he should seek to know in the way that other things are known now by those who care for them."

3. The most effective preachers have been studious men. They may not have been scholars in the

technical, scientific sense, but they have diligently employed their thinking and acquiring power. Look at a partial list of them. It is full of encouragement and inspiration to every genuine preacher of the Gospel. Paul, Augustine, Chrysostom, the two Gregories, Basil, Bernard, the seventeenth century preachers in the established Church of England and among the Nonconformists — South, Barrow, Howe, Owen — Wesley, Edwards, Davies, Liddon, Farrar, Parker, Dale, Robertson, MacLaren, Spurgeon, Evans, Finney, Moody, Beecher, Bushnell, Brooks, Lorimer. Indeed nearly all the leading present-day preachers in the large cities are studious men.

4. Other things being equal, the churches require and relish the preaching of men of rich mental vitality.

It sometimes seems on the surface not to be so, that the charlatan and the mountebank are most in demand. But in reality it is not true, if other things are equal. An officer of one of the largest popular churches in America on being asked, "What kind of preacher do your people most like to hear?" answered, "The man who gives us the most things to attend to." And as a matter of fact many, if not most, of the churches that have the largest congregations are served by the ablest preachers. Numerous examples could be given. "It is time

the illusion were dispelled that superior mental endowments and extensive learning unfit a wise man to be, not only a useful, but the most useful teacher of simple folk." — DURYEA.

II. METHODS OF ENRICHING THE MENTAL LIFE

Perhaps the object can best be served here by casting the points in the form of direct, brief maxims:

1. Begin systematic study at once and with a determination to keep it up to the end.

Emerson wrote in his "Journal" at the age of twenty-seven: "It is my purpose to methodize my days. I wish not to be straight-laced in my own rules, but to wear them easily and to make wisdom master of them. It is a resolving world, but God grant me persistency enough, so soon as I leave Brookline, and come to my books, to do as I intend." No man can prescribe a method of study for another. Each man must work in his own harness. But work he must, if he is to make full proof of his ministry. It has been remarked of Henry Ward Beecher that nobody ever knew when he studied. But study he did, as his ministry so abundantly testified. He is reported to have said, "Study and patient labor are indispensable even to genius." "A preacher should plan his study hours, and hedge them in with a wall of fire." — JEFFERSON. Broadly speaking, if a preacher can secure the fore-

noon for study, say from eight till one, he can live. How these hours are to be divided each one must judge for himself according to his needs. If from eight till ten, on the part of a young preacher, should be devoted to general study, and from ten till one to work on the sermon, he in the course of a year could accomplish much. After experience in study and composition has been attained, a much shorter period of the forenoon might be given to work on the sermon, which is probably the case with numerous ministers. Many men, who are pastors of large and exacting churches, have been able to secure from three to five hours a day for first-rate study. What could be more encouraging to the preacher than what John Masefield says of Shakespeare, the myriad-minded: "Shakespeare, like other poets, grew by continual, very difficult, mental labor, by the deliberate and prolonged exercise of every mental weapon, and by the resolve to do not 'the nearest thing,' precious to human sheep, but the difficult, new, and noble thing, glimmering beyond his mind, and brought to glow there by toil."

2. Choose only the first rate in every department of study.

What would be first rate for one man might be second rate for another. Each must decide for himself according to his native ability, his educational advantages, and his experience as a student since entering

the ministry. A great author, on reading Homer, said, "I light my candle at the sun." And Ruskin has asked: "Do you not know if you read this book you cannot read that?" Joubert said: "Plato puts light into one's eyes, and fills us with a clearness by which all objects afterwards become illuminated. Somehow or other the habit of reading him augments in us the capacity for discerning and entertaining whatever fine truths may afterwards present themselves. Like mountain air it sharpens our organs, and gives us an appetite for wholesome food."

3. Cultivate the ability of intense and prolonged application.

Preachers, like all other intellectual toilers, greatly vary in this respect. Some can prosecute hard study without harm much longer than others. The only caution needed is that a preacher shall not unduly strain his mind, or weary his body, at any given stage of his intellectual development. He should do his best; no more, no less.

4. Have on hand a special line, or lines of study.

Dr. Broadus advises that, "A young minister should give at least one-third of his time to studies not looking to next Sunday, but to future years."

5. Study for power and acquisition.

DeQuincey speaks of Power Literature and Knowledge Literature. The growing preacher needs to master both that he may constantly cultivate his

thinking power and constantly enrich his mind with abundant and choice material for discourse. The final and the finest fruit of such study is the development of his own critical judgment and inventive energy. "Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst. They are for nothing but to inspire. I had better never see a book than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit, and made a satellite instead of a system." — EMERSON. "All the books and reading in the world are valuable only as they are helps to the creative powers' exercise." — M. ARNOLD.

Coleridge's "Aids to Reflection" and Bacon's "Essays" are admirable in connection with this point.

6. Thoroughly master and preserve the subject in hand.

One man will adopt one method of doing this, and another man another method. Let every man use the method that best harmonizes with the grain of his make.

7. In studying an author inquire, if possible, into the facts of his personal history.

It is easy for an author's mind to become warped and his judgment clouded through disappointing experiences in life, which may thoroughly vitiate his mind for authorship. It is of prime importance that the preacher know this, if he wishes to guard

himself against adopting error as truth. Henry Rogers has expressed a valuable caution concerning this: "Reason, that vaunted guide of life, nowhere exists as a pure and colorless light, but is perpetually tinctured by the medium through which it passes; it flows in upon us through painted windows. And thus it is that perhaps scarcely once in ten thousand times, probably never, does man deliver a judgment on evidence simply and absolutely judicial."

8. Be chary of fragments of time.

Virgil to Dante: "Think that this day will never dawn again." Burnap: "The great secret of the world's welfare is the economy of time."

Edward Howard Griggs: "It is only while the water on the river of time flows over the mill wheel of to-day's life that we can utilize it." See his little book on "The Use of the Margin." It is full of valuable suggestions to a hard-worked minister. Darwin's son says that "One of his father's characteristic traits was his respect for time. He never for a moment forgot how valuable a thing it was. He economized every minute. He never lost even a few moments which he had on his hands by imagining that it was hardly worth while to begin work." John Clifford: "The key to my day is the utilization of the odd moments. I attach as much importance to the right use of these as to the work of the definitely filled hours. I try never to lose a minute,

but seize this one to jot down a thought, that to dip into a book, another to get a bit of rest." Tennyson tells of the origin of his exquisite poem, "The Lady Godiva": "I waited for the train at Coventry. I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge to watch the three tall spires; and there I shaped the city's ancient legend into this." While the grooms and porters were merely lounging lumps of flesh, the poet's brain was at work to make use of the passing moments. Rowland Hazard's "The Freedom of the Mind in Willing" is said to have been written on bits of envelopes while he was traveling on railway trains in the prosecution of his business. Alexander MacLaren: "Grasp the flying opportunity by the forelock. He is bald behind."

9. Carefully preserve spontaneous thoughts.

Emerson: "Look sharply after your thoughts. They come unlooked for, like a new bird seen on your trees, and if you turn to your usual task, disappear; and you shall never find that perception again." The highest thoughts sometimes come unheralded to the mind, as Goethe said his often did, "like free children of God crying 'Here we are.'" "Good thoughts are like birds which, when you get them, must be caged, or they certainly will fly away."

CHAPTER III

THE STUDY OF MEN

I. The Preacher's Need of the Study of Men

The study of men is the counterpart of the study of psychology. The latter furnishes a theoretical, an abstract, the former a concrete, practical knowledge of human nature. The minister needs to know men in those deep undercurrents of their being which all men have in common. He also needs to know individual men in their peculiarities and experiences. Every man differs from every other man. The preacher should strive to know that difference. This he can do only by personal contact with men of various types of character, of different occupations and circumstances in life. This knowledge is, at the same time, the most useful and the most difficult of acquisitions.

Probably a larger number of failures in the Christian ministry is to be traced to this one cause,— namely, the minister's practical ignorance of human nature, and so his inability successfully to deal with men, — than to all other causes combined. Whatever else he is ignorant of, these two things he must know — the Bible and men.

It is true of the sacred orator as Cicero said it was of the secular orator: "All the movements — that is, the emotions, affections, passions of the mind, which nature has bestowed upon man, also practical life and manners — must be mastered by him." It is easier, perhaps, than might at first appear, for a student for the ministry, and indeed for a settled pastor, to be more interested in subjects than in men.

II. The Scope of the Preacher's Study of Men

1. *The Study of Himself*[1]

Coleridge has said: "Alas! the largest part of mankind are nowhere greater strangers than at home."

The preacher should study himself in the outstanding characteristics of his mind, heart, disposition, his fundamental native outfit as a communicator of truth. He should know his special ability, his limitations and defects, in the sum of those forces that make him what he is. "A prime condition of steady growth into one's highest life is knowledge of one's self — rational taking account of one's own temperament and tendencies and powers. One can hardly handle himself to best advantage if he does not thoroughly understand himself, especially his prevailing temperament." — Henry Churchill King.

[1] Appendix III.

The preacher should put to himself and answer such questions as these:

(*a*) What is the prevailing cast of my mind? Is it philosophical, logical, poetical, practical?
(*b*) Am I deficient in oratorical imagination?
(*c*) Is my emotional nature well developed?
(*d*) Am I inclined to take a bright or a dark view of things?
(*e*) Have I a fair degree of practical judgment?
(*f*) Is my personality reasonably influential?
(*g*) Am I a reasonably effective public speaker?
(*h*) Have I a fair degree of organizing and administrative ability?

This self-examination the preacher should make not only that he may seek to supply his defects and use to greatest advantage his particular gifts, but also that he may be quickened into a sympathy with, a knowledge of, and labor for, his fellow men.

This sort of self-study is not attended with the dangers that accompany a microscopic introspection in order to discover whether or not one is a Christian. It is a purely vocational study for the purpose of increasing a preacher's usefulness as a communicator of truth. Any man in order to the best success in his occupation must know the instrument with which he works. The preacher is his own instru-

ment, a kind of tool, with which he labors for the ends of the kingdom. To know himself in his aptitude for his calling is safe and essential. Thus is he saved from developing undue self-consciousness either in the direction of self-conceit or of self-depreciation.

Such self-knowledge yields adaptation in reaching others. Edward Payson, one of the most successful pastors this country ever had, was a profound student of himself. His piety, which has not been surpassed, hardly equaled by any other American preacher, was not of itself sufficient for ministerial success. And he was wise enough to see it, and to give himself with utmost effort to know himself in order to the knowing of others. His profound self-knowledge gave him vast power and adroitness in scanning the character of his fellow men. Individual hearers were wont to inquire concerning Dr. Chalmers' searching preaching: "How did the preacher know my particular case so well? Who told him all about me?" Nobody had told him a word. Dr. Chalmers knew himself and so he knew the other man. He preached to himself and so preached effectively to others. "The most penetrating preaching is that of men who have looked into their own hearts to discover the common needs of all their brethren." — HENRY CLAY TRUMBULL.

2. *The Preacher's Study of Other Men* [1]

Norman McLeod, writing to his brother Donald in Paris, exclaimed "Men, men, meet men."

This study should include:

(1) All sorts of effective public speakers — preachers, politicians, speakers on educational, social, ethical, philanthropic, and other subjects. Let him ask himself: "What constitutes their effectiveness with their hearers?" "What in the men themselves, and what in their speaking reaches and influences me?" "What faults do they manifest that I should seek to avoid?" "In what respects, if any, should I take them as models in the presentation of truth?" In listening to impressive, persuasive preachers he should inquire: "Does my preaching contain these persuasive qualities?" By thus putting himself in the place of a hearer he is likely to impart to his own preaching more of reality and power. And there is need of this. For is not many a preacher compelled to confess at times that such a presentation of truth as his, if he listened to it, would not move him?

(2) The members of his church, congregation, and Sunday School. These furnish the preacher his most immediate, most obligatory, and most promising opportunity to gain a working knowledge of

[1] Appendix IV.

human nature for the ends of the kingdom. His study of them should include such aspects as the following: Their ages, temperaments, occupations, opportunities, pleasures, sorrows, temptations, homes and home life, general circumstances, the influences to which they are especially subject, their attitude toward Christ, toward men and youth from the viewpoint of organizing them for Christian work, individual and social.

Lyman Abbott in an article in the *Outlook* on "What Do You Know?" has this to say: "It is the question that confronts the preacher when he stands in the pulpit, not, How much do you know of formal theology, or of the history of the church? but, What do you know of the lives of these people in front of you? How much do you know of their temptations, of their burdens, of their aspirations? Do you know how to inspire, console, and help them?"

(3) The community: Is it rural, village, town, city? Is it prevailingly residential, commercial, manufacturing? What kinds of business are the most prominent and give character to the place? In this time the Christian preacher should make a specialty of the study of men in their industrial relations in store, factory, etc.; the working people wherever they gather for labor, that he may become acquainted with their environment, learn how to

approach them, and how to present to them the truth most intelligently and persuasively, and also that he may attain a concrete, practical understanding of the labor question and so become equipped for the exercise of his social ministry in this aspect of it; the home life of the wage earners, its character and needs in their bearing upon the discharge of his ministry; the influence of industry upon those engaged in it and the viewpoints of employer and employed concerning it. He should mingle freely with all classes of people, and, so far as feasible, meet men at their daily toil, meet human nature in its "shirt sleeves," as Oliver Wendell Holmes phrased it. Whatever else the modern preacher, pressed on every hand for variety of service as he is, is compelled to neglect, here is an opportunity, a necessity, that he must heed if he is to fulfill his function with the largest success and prove himself to be in this modern day a "good minister of Jesus Christ," "a workman not made ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

III. Encouraging Examples of the Study of Men

Josiah Strong, in "Our Country," quotes the confession of a noted lobbyist concerning the methods employed at Albany in behalf of the liquor interests: "After the election and before the Legis-

lature convened our correspondents throughout the State gave us special and truthful descriptions of every one of the opposition members, their mode of life, their habits, their eccentricities, and their religious views; whether they were approachable; with a thorough analysis of their characters in every way, so that we might understand our subjects in advance." All this in the service of evil; for the destruction of men. Shall not the minister of the Gospel be as wise in the service of Christ for the salvation of men? Or shall the children of this world be wiser in their generation than the children of light?

Dr. Kirk visited the wharves of Boston: "He learned what men were doing. He looked upon every weather-beaten sailor as an undubbed professor of geography, from whom he might receive information." He talked with farmers and gardeners about the cultivation of the soil.

Charles Kingsley: "I try to catch men by their leading ideas, and so draw them off insensibly to my leading idea. With the farmer he discussed the rotation of crops, and with the laborer the science of hedging and ditching. And yet while he seemed to ask for information, he unconsciously gave more than he received."

Norman McLeod: "He never came into my shop," said a blacksmith of him, "without talking

with me as though he had been a blacksmith all his life. But he never went away without leaving Christ in my heart."

Henry Ward Beecher: "When I see a man I instinctively divide him up, and ask myself, How much has he of the animal, how much of the spiritual, and how much of the intellectual? And what is his intellect, perceptive or reflective? Is he ideal, or apathetic, or literal? And I instinctively adapt myself to him. There is not a deck hand on the ferryboats nor a man at Fulton Ferry whom I do not know and who has not helped me."

IV. Fruits of the Study of Men

1. It warms the preacher's interest in men and makes him a genuine man among men. It humanizes him.

2. It makes him easily approachable to the men he wishes to interest and influence.

3. It gives him practical wisdom in dealing with the members and the affairs of his church. "It is not courage, but lack of sense which usually gets preachers into trouble." — Jefferson.

4. It gives him power of adaptation to all classes of men.

5. It aids him as a public speaker.

Particularly valuable to him in this regard is his hearing workingmen talk. He thus gains a mastery

of the vernacular — a rugged, homely, direct, pointed way of putting things. It has been said of Whitefield and Wesley that they were wont to listen to women in their conversation in the Billingsgate market, and learned from them much of their effectiveness in the popular presentation of truth. Emerson has said: "The orator must command the whole scale of the language from the most eloquent to the most low. The street must be one of his schools. Ought not the scholar to be able to convey his meaning in terms as short and strong as the porter or the truckman uses to convey his?"

CHAPTER IV

THE STRUCTURE OF DISCOURSE

The Text

I. Why Public Religious Discourse Is Based upon Scripture Texts

The use of the text tends

1. To furnish a specific truth for the sermon.
   It contains the preacher's message.
2. To promote thoughtfulness in preaching.
   If the Bible is in any distinct sense the Book of God, it contains in a peculiar way the thoughts of God, and God's thoughts are higher and richer than man's thoughts. Thus they tend to stimulate the preacher's inventive energy. He thinks God's thoughts after Him.

   Brastow: "No professional man does so much, so varied, and so difficult intellectual work as the modern preacher. It would be utterly impossible for him without the use of suggestive texts to produce the same amount and quality of material that is now produced every week. No man but a rhetorical genius

could do it. No man in our day, especially, can spin out of his own personal independent inner resources two religious orations or disquisitions or addresses every week and expect to live or to be effective for any considerable length of time."

3. To direct the course of thought in the sermon and so to further its unity and progress.
4. To secure variety in preaching.
   This follows from 2.
5. To impart a certain divine authority to preaching.
   This is based upon 2.
6. To aid the memory and attention of the hearer.
   This is particularly the case if the text is aptly chosen and is skillfully woven into the discourse as in textual and expository preaching. Robertson and McLaren are good examples of this point.
7. To promote regard for the Bible in the popular mind.
8. To promote the study of the Scriptures among the people.
   7 and 8 center in the influence of the example of the preacher. If he, an educated man and a special student of the Bible, thrusts it into prominence in public discourse, his hearers will naturally think that it is worthy of their

attention, and if his preaching is adequately Biblical, definite lines of Scripture study will be constantly suggested to them.

9. To impart concreteness and vividness of expression to preaching.

These qualities of style uniquely mark the Bible, and they make their appeal to the imagination of the preacher. The book that furnishes him his message is also his best teacher in the finest qualities of expression. How fortunate is the preacher in this respect as compared with the lawyer and the doctor in relation to their textbooks.

II. What Sorts of Bible Texts Should Be Prominent in Public Religious Discourse

1. Capital Texts — *i.e.* those passages of Scripture that contain the central truths of the Christian religion.

A study of the use of texts by the great preachers is very valuable.

South, Robert Hall, Newman, Robertson, Liddon, McLaren, Watkinson, Bushnell, Beecher, Brooks, G. A. Gordon, Coffin.

2. Fresh Texts.

(1) They stimulate originality in the preacher.

(2) Awaken the interest in hearers at the outset of discourse.

(3) Frequently afford satisfaction and pleasure to hearers in the unexpectedness of the transition from text to subject.

Bushnell: John 20:8. "Then entered in therefore the other disciple."

Theme: Unconscious Influence.

3. Splendid texts.

That is, texts of profound emotion, of highly wrought imagery, and of fine poetic beauty, if the preacher can use them and not have too marked contrast between them and the discourse.

The splendid text stimulates the preacher's imagination, esthetic sense, elegance of expression, and highest effort in discourse.

4. Obscure Texts.

There are numerous texts in the Bible that are difficult to understand and of the meaning of which the people are ignorant. The preacher renders his hearers a distinct service by explaining to them the significance of such passages.

Three conditions should obtain in the use of obscure texts.

a. If the preacher understands their meaning.

b. If it is reasonably certain that he can make them clear to the hearers.

c. If the passages are important enough to warrant the necessary explanation.

5. Shall accommodated texts be used?

An accommodated text is one between which and the theme there is similarity of principle in dissimilar spheres of truth or of action. Or, as Phelps defines it, "The principle in the text resembles the principle of the subject but is radically distinct from it."

It is to be observed that accommodation is not allegorizing as practiced by Origen and Augustine, who made allegory an inherent content of Scripture.

The use of the accommodated text is based upon the recognized analogy between the material and the spiritual sphere so prominent in the Bible itself. II. Corinthians, 4:6: "Seeing it is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

The God of Creation is the Gracious God.

The use of the accommodated text is warranted only if

a. the analogy between the text and the subject is clear and striking.

b. the text suggests a valuable truth.

Directness rather than accommodation in the use of Scripture should be the rule of a

ministry, for in the strictest sense accommodated preaching is not Biblical preaching. The preacher is under deep moral obligation to interpret Scripture with utmost fairness.

Examples:

MacLaren: Leviticus 26:10 — "Ye shall eat old store and bring forth the old because of the new."

Subject: — The Fullness of the Divine Gifts. The text is in the material sphere. He employs it in the spiritual sphere.

Bushnell: Luke 2:7 — "There was no room for them in the inn."

Subject: — Christ Waiting to Find Room. Is Bushnell's sermon on John 20: 8, Unconscious Influence, a case of accommodation?

Morrison: Matthew 4:21 — "And going on from thence he saw two other brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets."

Subject: — The Net Mender.

Used in a spiritual sense.

Shannon: Luke 5:4 — "Put out into the deep."

Subject: The Spiritual Deeps.

It is not too much to affirm that the careful selection of Scripture texts, the exact exegetical study of them, and imaginative and emotional brooding over them, until their most vital and quickening significance is disclosed to the preacher, is in a distinct sense fundamental in Christian preaching. The men in the modern pulpit who thus relate themselves and their messages to the Bible are the men who have the widest hearing, make the profoundest impression, and accomplish the largest usefulness. Every young preacher, especially, should take this to heart. The Scriptures, as a source of preaching material, are still abiding and vital.

The Introduction

I. The Idea of the Introduction

It is the function of the Introduction, in preaching, gradually to approach the subject for one or more of the following purposes: to prepare the hearers to understand it; to awaken their interest in it; to gain their good will in behalf of the preacher and of the discourse.

The function of the Introduction in public religious discourse combines the three qualities of the exordium as set forth respectively by the three classic writers on the topic.

> Aristotle: "The most necessary business of the exordium, and this is peculiar to it, is to throw

some light on the end for the sake of which the speech is made."

Quintilian: "The beginning of a speech has no other design than to prepare the mind of the hearer to listen attentively to the other parts of the discourse."

Cicero: "The first judgment and, as it were, prejudice, in favor of a speech, arises from its setting out, which ought instantly to soothe and entice the hearer."

In current pastoral preaching the chief function of the introduction is to prepare the hearers to understand the subject or to arouse their interest in it, or both, and it is needed for the following reasons:

1. The frequency of preaching.
2. The influence of the world and of daily occupation upon the hearers during the week, which is likely to be hostile to interest in a sacred subject.
3. The hearers have no special knowledge of, or interest in, the subject.
4. The native inertia of the human mind.

The function of the introduction in securing the good will of hearers is employed with audiences composed of non-churchgoing people, who are either indifferent or opposed to religion, out-of-door serv-

ices, and in the treatment in pastoral preaching of the severer truths of the Christian religion that particularly search the conscience.

Psychologically, the introduction differs widely from the conclusion. The one addresses particularly the intellect and the imagination and lightly the sensibility of the hearer. The other, the emotions and the will. The one seeks to gain a hearing, the other calls for action. The one is the entering of the wedge, the other is driving it home.

II. Qualities of the Introduction

1. It should be pertinent, *i.e.* it should contain no irrelevant material or suggest irrelevant thoughts in the hearers. It should not lack suggestiveness, but its suggestiveness should always be germane to the topic in hand. It should proceed toward the subject with the straightness and the certainty of a well-aimed arrow to its mark.
2. It should in no wise suggest the material that is to appear in the body of the discourse, nor should it contain material that intrinsically belongs to the development of the leading truth of the sermon. An introduction may be too good. It should merely prepare the way for that which is to come. It calls attention to the approaching feast, but does not serve it. It

is not the process of carving a statue, but of hinting the outline and preparing the tools. It is an introduction and nothing more.

Phelps: "The introduction should lay claim to nothing which will serve the purpose of the sermon more effectively elsewhere."

Vinet: "The exordium should be drawn from an idea in immediate contact with a subject without forming a part of it. It should be an idea between which and that of the discourse there is no place for another idea, so that the first step we take out of that idea transports us into our subject."

3. It should not awaken too high expectation in respect of either the matter or the style of the discourse.

The introduction should never promise beyond the fulfillment in the body of the sermon. The step from the introduction to the other and more vital parts of discourse should always be a step up, never a step down.

4. It should be rhetorically finished, but not elaborately developed or highly adorned.

The king's courier should not be so finely dressed as to detract from the king's message. Phelps: "A sermon should never be remembered by the splendor of its exordium."

5. It should be conciliatory, but dignified in tone.

Paul was a master of assemblies here. A careful analysis of the opening of the following addresses is one of the most helpful studies that a preacher can prosecute. It yields the finest homiletic returns. Examples: Acts 13 : 16–22. 17 : 22, 23. 22 : 3, 4.[1]

6. It should be adjusted to the mental state of the hearers at the outset of discourse.

   Schott: "The preacher should remember that his own interest in his subject was not sudden and instantaneous, but rose by degrees; therefore, he should not expect that his hearers will enter into the consideration of his subject with the same zeal which he has acquired by having passed through a prolonged study of it. They must observe the same law of gradation which he followed; and when he produces his discourse anew before them it should be a facsimile of the discourse as he produced it originally in his study. He should not attempt to make them leap up at once to the very summit of his excitement."

7. It should be clear, concrete, racy — never trite or tedious — brief.

   Wilkinson: "Never let an audience say, we tolerate an introduction. It should be arrested at once and held by it."

[1] Appendix V.

III. Suggestions Concerning the Composing of the Introduction

1. Do not begin to write the introduction until the subject and its treatment are clearly defined in your own mind.
2. Keep in mind while writing the introduction the specific treatment the subject is to receive.
3. Write the introduction with the utmost painstaking.

   Vinet: "No other part of the discourse needs as much exactness or as much address as the exordium, none being heard with more coolness, and none more severely judged. It is with exordiums as with nice and exact mechanical operations, in which the workman finally succeeds, but not without having broken more than one of the instruments which he uses."
4. Guard yourself against writing for rhetorical effect in the introduction.

   The temptation to fine writing is stronger here than in connection with any other part of discourse, and there is more danger of being artificial, insincere, than anywhere else in the sermon.

   Ask: How would this introduction strike me if I was in the pew listening to it?

5. If necessary, strive to get into an intellectual and spiritual glow by reading a stimulating author before attempting to compose the introduction. Do not begin to write in absolutely cold blood.

The Subject (*technically, The Proposition*)

The securing of legitimate and suitable subjects of discourse from the Scriptures is basic in the preacher's art, and it is among the most difficult as well as the most delightful of his tasks. The freshness, tone, power of his preaching vitally center here. He is to remember that the truths of the Bible were originally intended and adapted for people remote in time and distance, and in an environment wholly unlike that of our time and in this western land. The Bible has a marked local coloring. The preacher seeks the living, abiding content of its truth, which finds its central expression in the propositions of his discourses.

The most effective preachers, other things being equal, are those who have the fine homiletic insight to deduce from an antique Book the most apt and telling subjects of present-day discourse.

The subjects of such preachers as the following are worthy of special study: Newman, Robertson, Parker, MacLaren, Watkinson, Morrison, Bushnell, Brooks, G. A. Gordon, Coffin, Jowett.

Whyte: "The very titles of Newman's sermons are a study in homiletics. To read and ponder his simple titles is a stimulus to the mind of the ministerial reader. A carpenter friend of mine once told me that sometimes on a Sabbath night he took down a volume of Newman's sermons just for the benefit and delight of reading over their titles."

I. The Qualities of the Subject

1. It should contain a central Scripture truth.
   Incentives to the preacher for using the greater themes:
   (1) The most eminent and successful toilers in so-called secular spheres grapple with great themes.
      a. In literature:
         History, Gibbon.
         Poetry, Milton.
         Oratory, Burke.
         Tragedy, Sophocles.
         Philosophy, Plato.
      b. In Painting, Raphael.
      c. In Music, Beethoven.
      d. In Sculpture, Angelo.
      e. In Architecture, Wren.
   The preacher is to remember that he has in

the Christian religion the greatest theme of all.

(2) The most eminent and useful preachers employ great themes.

South: Interest deposed and truth restored. All contingencies under the direction of God.

Chalmers: On the Reasonableness of Faith.

Bushnell: The Completing of the Soul. The Immediate Knowledge of God.

MacLaren: The Living Dead. Love and Forgiveness.

(3) The Best Writers on Preaching, among whom are some of the strongest and most effective preachers, urge the use of central subjects.[1]

(4) The central truths of Scripture are the most useful truths.

This is evidenced by the history of preaching.

2. The subject should contain a specific truth.

Newman: "I would go the length of recommending a preacher to place a distinct categorical proposition before him, such as he can write down in a form of words, and to guide and limit his preparation by

[1] Appendix VI.

it, and to aim in all he says to bring it out, and nothing else. Nothing is so fatal to the effect of a sermon as the habit of preaching on three or four subjects at once."

The specific proposition has four advantages:

(1) It strengthens the preacher's intellect. It grinds it down to a keen edge.

(2) It stimulates to fertility of invention.[1]

(3) It tends to impart definiteness to the presentation of truth in the division and in the development of the sermon.

(4) It tends to cultivate discrimination in the hearers in listening to the truth of the sermon.

3. The subject should be framed with the utmost precision of diction.

Shedd: "A propositional sentence is very different from an ordinary sentence. The proposition of a sermon ought to be eminent for the nice exactness of its expression and the hard finish of its diction. As a constituent part of the skeleton it should be purest bone."

There are four reasons for this:

(1) The subject is the heart of the discourse. Fénelon: "The discourse is the proposition

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unfolded, and the proposition is the discourse condensed."

Phelps: "The proposition is to the discourse what the heart is to the physical system. The relation is organic."

(2) The brevity of the subject.

(3) It is to be heard, not read.

(4) As with the specific quality of the proposition, it stimulates to exactness of the preacher's mental movement and expression throughout the discourse.

On exactness of statement of the subject see J. H. Jowett, "The Preacher," p. 133.

4. The subject should be fresh in both thought and expression.

Freshness of subject spreads its contagion through the entire sermon. Fresh preaching, so essential in our time, largely inheres in freshness of topic.

Freshness of subject may be secured in three very simple ways:

(1) By careful exegetical, imaginative, emotional study of the text in its individual words, clauses, setting.

(2) By studying the best models of subjects.

(3) By persistent practice.

The last by far the most important and rewarding.

The Analysis of the Subject[1]

In dividing the subject for presentation in public discourse two qualities are to be specially stressed: Variety and Visibility.

I. Variety

The preacher should be slave to no one method, but master of all methods. This is imperative in sustained interest and power in the pulpit. Monotony here condemns more surely and more swiftly than almost anywhere else in current preaching.

How may variety be secured?

1. By the preacher being true to himself in the analysis of the subject of discourse.

   He should use no other man's method, no matter how superior to his own it may be. In the preparation of every sermon, its outline should spring out of his own mind and heart. If the preacher has the degree of individuality that warrants his being a preacher, his own method, although much inferior to another's, is the best for him, because it is his. He gets himself expressed in it for larger effectiveness than by adopting the method of the most brilliant homiletic genius. His personal flavor is there, and

[1] Appendix VIII.

that counts for much in the estimation of his hearers. It sometimes costs a large measure of independence and courage, particularly in the earlier years of the ministry, for the preacher to be true to himself in this regard. But it is the only way in which to grow into the greatest personal development as a communicator of Christian truth. And, in the end, it is certain to yield its own rich reward. He is on the way to becoming a master of assemblies.

2. By having the subject dominate the plan.

   That is to say, by not arbitrarily superimposing an artificial outline upon the subject, but by drawing out the truth of the subject. Thus as varied as is the definite truth of each proposition, so varied will be its analytic treatment. Herein is found one of the most fruitful sources of an interesting and persuasive variety in public discourse.

3. By the preacher being true to the genius of a text.

   Phelps warns against bombarding a text. The genius of a text sometimes lends it to textual division, sometimes to topical division. That is, the different clauses of the text may constitute the analysis of the subject, or the subject itself, independent of

the text from which it is drawn, may furnish the divisions, the so-called topical method. Examples of each method:

The following examples are taken from varied sources. They are partly the author's and are partly adopted from others. The practical use that they serve does not call for specific acknowledgment of authorship.

(1) The textual division.

a. The divisions may proceed in the order of the words or clauses of the text and expressed in the language of the text.

I. Corinthians 13:13. "And now abideth, Faith, Hope, Love; these three."

Subject: The Abiding Christian Virtues.

1. Faith.
2. Hope.
3. Love.

II. Corinthians 13:14. Subject: The Threefold Benediction:

1. The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The Love of God.
3. The Communion of the Holy Spirit.

b. The divisions may proceed in the order of the clauses of the text and be ex-

pressed in the language of the text and the preacher's language.

Psalm 84 : 11. "For the Lord God is a Sun and Shield. The Lord will give grace and glory."

Subject: God's twofold manifestation to us, and God's twofold gift to us.

I. God's twofold manifestation to us — For the Lord God is a sun and shield.

II. God's twofold gift to us — The Lord will give grace and glory.

c. The divisions may proceed in the logical order of the content of the text.

Ephesians 5 : 20. "Giving thanks always for all things to God."

1. What we are to do — give thanks.
2. To whom — God.
3. What for — all things.
4. When — always.

(2) The topical division.

Here is offered a threefold variety. The analysis may proceed through the subject, through the predicate, or through the copula.

I. John 4 : 18. "Perfect love casts out fear."

Love — It casts out fear because it is full of devotion, of hope, of joy.

Fear — Love casts out the fear of God's wrath, of ill success, of the judgments of men, of ingratitude.

Casts out — Love casts out fear; for we cannot fear when we love; we have nothing to fear when we love.

4. By variously expressing the truth of the division — positively, negatively, interrogatively.

The foregoing examples are sufficient to indicate the possible variety in analyzing subjects of discourse. If the preacher will permit his homiletic insight to have its way and will cultivate it by constant and wise use he will be delivered from bondage to monotony in dividing propositions — one of his easiest and worst banes.

II. Visibility

What is meant by it? It does not mean —

1. Minute and artificial detail in breaking up a subject for treatment.
2. The formal numbering and announcing of divisions, either at the opening or during the progress of a discourse.
3. What is meant is the difference between a natural, visible plan and the free-essay style of preaching that purposely conceals the outline, as advocated by Alexander in his "Thoughts on Preaching," page 32, "Di-

viding Sermons," and page 44, "Free Writing," or, to put the matter concretely, the difference between the method of Robertson, Liddon, MacLaren, Spurgeon, G. A. Gordon, on the one hand, and Arnold, Kingsley, Stanley, Holland, on the other. Instead of trying to conceal the outline, the preacher purposely discloses it to the hearer that he may be aided in grasping and retaining the progress of the thought at the chief stages of the discourse. In other words, that his memory and attention may be economized.[1]

The distinctness of the divisions and the degree of formality in numbering and announcing them is in proportion to the tax the sermon makes upon the intellect of the hearer. The more thoughtful the discourse the louder the call for visibility of outline. Didactic, doctrinal, argumentative preaching requires more formality of method than preaching that is addressed more particularly to the imagination and the feelings, which seem to have a sort of order of their own. Consolatory, hortatory, descriptive sermons do not yield themselves to severity and distinctness of outline.

The traditional sermon on Spring, with the following carefully marked plan, is a caricature of an

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intrinsically valuable method in certain kinds of discourse.

First: I shall show what Spring is.
Secondly: I shall prove there is a Spring.
Thirdly: I shall answer the objections.
I shall endeavor to confute those who say there is no Spring.
And lastly: I shall apply the subject.

The general rule would be to announce the divisions with the least formality consistent with the utmost clearness and sharpness in grasping the truth of the sermon on the part of the hearers.

Before closing the discussion of the divisions, it is pertinent to remark that, in order most effectively to serve the end of their use in preaching, they should be few. Two or three are better than five or six. By contracting the number of divisions the preacher is likely to pack more thought, and more clearly defined thought, into those he employs, and so does not dissipate, but concentrates, the truth of the proposition, which tends to make his preaching suggestive, rather than wearily exhaustive.

If divisions are unduly multiplied in a sermon they tend to defeat one of the ends of their existence — the economizing of the mental expenditure of the hearer by relieving his memory and attention. "Amplify rather than multiply" should be the law of modern preaching.

The Application

Spurgeon: "Where the application begins, there the sermon begins."

The application may be distributed throughout the body of the discourse, or concentrated in the conclusion, which is always applicatory in character. In textual and expository preaching, the former method is the more natural and effective; in topical preaching, the application appears as a burning point at the end of the discourse. The forms of the application are numerous; inference, recapitulation, remarks, lessons, appeal. When skillfully handled, recapitulation is one of the most effective ways of applying the truths of discourse. Many leading preachers have used this method with marked interest and power.

Brooks: "A sermon is not like a picture which, once painted, stands all together before the eye. Its parts elude the memory, and it is good, before you close, to gather all the parts together, and, as briefly as you can, set them as one completed whole before your hearers' mind." [1]

Broadly speaking, the application is neglected in present-day preaching, much to the loss of effectiveness. This is notably true of the appeal. It is almost a lost art in preaching. The truth of dis-

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course is not pressed home upon hearers in order to secure immediate decision concerning it. Modern preaching is full of good advice; it is thoroughly reasonable, but it is not adequately constructed to produce action. It too often seems to be satisfied to lodge the truth in the minds of hearers, and to leave it there to do its own work. It does not sufficiently impinge upon the conscience and the will of an audience. Professor Fisher, the eminent Church historian, has given his testimony on this point: "There is not enough effort in the pulpit to produce an immediate decision on the question, 'Whom will ye serve?'" [1]

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CHAPTER V

THE DIFFERENT WAYS OF PREPARING AND DELIVERING DISCOURSES

I. Writing in Full and Delivering from Manuscript

It has been commonly stated that this method began in the reign of Henry VIII of England, when preachers needed to be on their guard as to what they said. This seems to be an error. Lupton in his "Life of Colet" says that "one of the charges for heresy against Colet was, according to Erasmus, having said in the pulpit that there were some who preached written sermons — the stiff and formal way of many in England — he had indirectly reflected on his Bishop, who, from his advanced age, was in the habit of so doing." This would indicate that the written method was practiced early in the sixteenth century — about 1511–12, or a little later, many years prior to the Reformation in England and the time of Henry VIII, concerning which the *Saturday Review* pertinently remarks: "It shows that the custom of preaching written sermons did not, as is often supposed, come in with the

Reformation, and is rather an English than a Protestant peculiarity."

The written method has been used chiefly in England, Scotland, and America.

In England

Some of the leading preachers of the seventeenth century wrote and read their sermons: Hooker, Taylor, South.

Modern English preachers have used the same method: Newman, Liddon, Stanley, Church, Farrar, and others.

In Scotland

Andrew Thomson, Chalmers, Robert S. Candlish.

In America

Jonathan Edwards and his successors. Many of the most eminent and useful American preachers have used this method: Bushnell, Taylor, Brooks, Parkhurst, Gordon.

Among the Unitarians: Channing, Dewey, Gannett, Putnam.

II. Writing in Full and Delivering Memoriter

This method has prevailed on the continent of Europe — in France, Germany, Italy. Some of the

great French preachers of the seventeenth century: Bossuet, Bourdaloue.

III. Not Writing in Full, or at All, and Delivering without Manuscript; the So-called Extemporaneous Method

By "extemporaneous" is not meant unpremeditated, impromptu. The etymological sense of the word applies only to the delivery. The sentences, not the thoughts, are born at the time. It is always understood that the materials of the sermon have been carefully prepared.

The extemporaneous method was the prevalent one during the first five centuries of the Christian era: Origen, Chrysostom, Basil, the two Gregories, Augustine.

Preachers of the Middle Ages: Bernard of Clairvaux, and others.

Preachers of the Reformation period: Luther, Calvin.

Some of the leading seventeenth-century preachers, both English and French.

Many modern preachers in England and America: Robertson, Spurgeon, MacLaren, Storrs, Methodist preachers generally.

IV. The Modifications of These Three Fundamental Methods Are Numerous

1. A fully written sermon, partly read, and partly delivered memoriter.
2. A sermon fully written, and purely improvised thoughts inserted during delivery.
3. A sermon partly written and partly read, the rest being extemporaneous in both preparation and delivery.
4. A sermon fully written, with the train of thought, not the words, mastered and delivered without manuscript.
5. A sermon mentally composed, without aid of writing, and essentially committed to memory.
6. The chief heads and the transitions of an extemporary sermon, also close of the important paragraphs and particular illustrations, committed to memory.

ADVANTAGES OF THE WRITTEN OVER THE EXTEMPORANEOUS METHOD OF PREPARING SERMONS.[1]

1. The first advantage is superiority of the subject matter.

   The thought in the written sermon is likely to

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be more profound, compact, clearer, fresher. "The pen is a marvelous magnet to draw thought out of the brain." The history of preaching verifies the foregoing statement and it is supported by the best sermonic critics.

Bautain: "The pen is the scalpel which dissects the thoughts, and never, except when you write down what you behold internally, can you succeed in clearly discerning all that is contained in a conception, or in obtaining its well-marked scope."

Park: "We are compelled to admit that of two men, one of whom uniformly preaches what he has written, and the other uniformly preaches what he has not written, the former will in mature life be apt to excel the other in depth and comprehensiveness of discourse."

Brooks: "I think that the best sermons that ever have been preached, taking all the qualities of sermons into account, have probably been extemporaneous sermons, but that the number of good sermons preached from manuscript have probably been far greater than the number of good sermons preached extemporaneously."

The reason of the superiority of the written to the extemporaneous sermon in respect of material may be termed a physiological one. The mind calls to its aid two of the bodily senses — the sense of touch and the sense of sight. Touch aids the eye, and both aid the mind. They hold the mind to exactness of movement in the process of thinking, and the eye reports to the mind defects in the expressed thought.

Bautain: "One is never fully conscious of all that is in one's own thought except after having written it out. So long as it remains shut up in the inside of the mind, it preserves a certain haziness; one does not see it completely unfolded; and one cannot consider it on all sides, in each of its facets, in each of its bearings."

2. A second advantage is superiority in the arrangement of the subject matter.

Sir Matthew Hale said that, "while he wrote down what he thought on, his thoughts were the easier kept close to work, and kept in method."

This advantage is not so inherent in the method of preparation as is the first advantage named. Indeed, there are those, among them Drs. Dale and Robinson, who maintain

that the advantage here is on the side of the extemporaneous sermon. One reason given for this is, that the arrangement of the thoughts is held in a fluid state longer than in the case of the written sermon and so more time is allowed for securing the best method. Theoretically, there is some force in this position, but "in point of fact," as it has been said, "there are more unintelligible trains of thought in extemporaneous than in written sermons." And the fact is to be accounted for, it is to be feared, on the ground that the extempore preacher does not bring himself to the work of preparation with the same faithfulness that the writer of sermons does. He is likely to trust too much to his acquired facility of speech and to the inspiration of the moment of delivery.

A. P. Peabody: "The extempore sermon is likely to be particularly faulty in the introduction, which is long and repetitious. I think that from a fourth to a third part of the first half of most of the extempore sermons that I have heard might have been omitted, had the sermon been written."

If the plan of the extemporaneous sermon is fully and carefully written out, the written

sermon has little or no superiority in the arrangement of the material unless it may be in some of the details of the development.

3. A third advantage is superiority in certain fundamental qualities of style; such as clearness, exactness, conciseness, elegance.

   Bacon's aphorism is true of the preacher: "Writing maketh an exact man." The extemporizer, especially if he is of warm temperament, is in great danger of exaggeration, diffuseness, repetition of statement. The pen, to use Cicero's phrase, "eats down" exuberance of style. Here, again, the writer of sermons calls to his aid the service of the eye both in the process of composition and of correction, and this is a very great help in cultivating exactness, conciseness, and elegance of style. Wilkinson: "No merely human speaker ever yet spoke on this planet whose extemporary utterance, taken down without change absolutely as it fell from his lips, would read grammatically, rhetorically, and logically clear of fault — judged, I mean, by the relative standard of that same speaker's own written production."

4. A fourth advantage consists in superiority in the elaborate treatment of the central truths

of Christianity; such as the Attributes of God, the Divinity of Christ, the Atonement, The Inspiration of the Scriptures.

Such treatment of such themes compels the mind to its severest thinking. They are open to subtle objections. They are beset with great difficulties in popular presentation. They require, therefore, on the part of the preacher, patient and deep reflection, nice discrimination, close reasoning, accuracy of statement. These cannot be secured with certainty unless the sermon is fully and carefully written.

5. A fifth advantage is that the written method preserves the fruits of the preacher's severest toil.

Every thoughtful and sincere preacher, in certain stages of his ministerial course, labors exceptionally long and hard in the investigation of a truth or truths of God's Word. He may never have so good an opportunity again for such investigations, and, if he should, he might not expect to do any better. It is a serious loss of time and strength and of mental expenditure to be compelled to go over the same essential ground again. The sermons, therefore, that embody the fruit of such toil should be

carefully written out. They may bear repetition.

6. A sixth advantage is that writing stimulates to continuous faithfulness in preparation, and so contributes to the constant growth of the preacher as a thinker and scholar.

The written method compels the preacher to give a certain amount of time, usually considerable time, each week to the making of the sermon. And the very act of using the pen enlists the consent of the mind and commits it to toil. Brooks: "Whatever may be said about the duty of labor upon extemporaneous discourses, the advantage in point of faithfulness will no doubt always be with the written sermon. Many a man speaks what he would not dare to write." Experience proves that the ministerial conscience less easily tolerates vicious extemporaneousness in writing than in unwritten address.

Writing seems to be intrinsically fitted to create and to foster a critical mental habit; there seems to be a vital alliance between the habit of writing and the choicest culture.

The preacher, therefore, who admits that he cannot write a sermon makes a most damaging and humiliating confession. It is

as great a calamity not to be able to express one's thoughts in writing as it is to be a perpetual slave to the pen. No true minister of Christ should tolerate either.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE *MEMORITER* METHOD

I. Advantages

So far as preparation goes, this method is identical with the written method and possesses all its advantages. In one respect, the sermon written to be delivered from memory is likely to be superior to the sermon that is written to be read in the pulpit — the individual sentences are framed and the topics arranged with a view to fitness for delivery. Simplicity and clearness characterize the method; directness, brevity, absence of involved structure, the sentences. It has been said of Dr. Guthrie, as a memoriter preacher, that he cut out the parts of discourse that did not readily submit to the memory. In delivery, the memoriter method affords the preacher the advantage of the normal position of the body and of the organs of speech.

II. Disadvantages

These are numerous, and for the great majority of preachers, fatal to the effective delivery of the sermon.

1. It consumes too much time in committing the manuscript.
2. It overburdens the ordinary verbal memory.
3. It injures the memory by making its action excessive, abnormal.

   The memory is loaded down with a piece of work for a merely temporary purpose, and it is then discharged. This mechanical use of the memory is in danger of weakening it for its more philosophical functions.
4. It monopolizes the memory in delivery at the expense of the other powers of the preacher that are essential to the most effective utterance: the intellect, the imagination, the sensibility, which are operative in both reading and extemporaneous delivery.
5. It fetters the preacher's personality: the power which lies back of, and enforces, his intellect, imagination, emotion.

   He is hindered from throwing himself upon the audience in a free, natural, impressive way, as he can in either reading or extemporizing. It brings into bondage his eye. It is in fact reading the sermon from the tablet of memory instead of from a manuscript. The eye is introverted, lusterless, and so is as much of a barrier between the preacher and the hearer as reading is. The audience

might as well see a partially dropped eyelid as a dull, lifeless eye. It has been said of Bourdaloue that he closed his eyes while delivering his memoriter discourse.

6. It is difficult to avoid the air of recitation in delivery. "Monotony and wearisome sameness of cadence are almost inevitable."
7. It cuts the preacher off from the insertion of valuable impromptu materials, a disadvantage that does not attach to either of the other modes of delivery.
8. The preacher is exposed to the danger of irretrievably breaking down in delivery.

Notwithstanding the foregoing disadvantages of the memoriter method, it is not to be absolutely condemned for all preachers. The man with so facile and retentive verbal memory as to master the manuscript in a single reading or two, and whose personality is unfettered in delivery, may use this method to advantage. In the history of preaching it has been so used by a considerable number of effective preachers, as, for instance, Dr. Guthrie, of Scotland, and it is said to be on the increase at the present time by those preachers who have found the extemporaneous method of delivery, on account of its verbosity and inexactness,

unsatisfactory, and who are unwilling to fall into the bondage of reading sermons in the pulpit.

THE ADVANTAGES OF THE EXTEMPORANEOUS METHOD OF *DELIVERING* SERMONS

Unquestionably, the extemporaneous method is ideally the most effective one of addressing men on the topics of the gospel. It is somewhat unnatural either to read or to recite to our fellow men, rather than to speak to them. The manuscript is a barrier between the preacher and his hearers. That barrier may be reduced to a minimum, but not wholly removed. Other things being equal — that is, if the sermon delivered extemporaneously could have the good qualities of the discourse delivered from manuscript, such as depth and correctness of thought — this method should be used exclusively.

I. Advantages to the Preacher

1. The extemporaneous mode of delivery and, to some extent, the extemporaneous mode of preparation are favorable to conducing in the preacher alertness of mind.

He is likely to be wider awake to all that is going on about him, to be a quicker and more accurate observer of persons and things, and

readier to take thoughts on the wing than is the reader of sermons. This is inherent in the extemporaneous method. The reader of sermons gives expression to his thoughts in his study, in the near vicinity of books, and in an atmosphere favorable to the calm and accurate working of the reflective power of the mind. This bondage to the pen and to the quiet of the study in the process of composing is apt to demand the same condition in the process of invention. The extemporizer, on the other hand, thinks and composes on his feet, in the act of speaking to a popular assembly. This of itself tends to stimulate his perceptive powers, and to foster the mental habit of picking up material while moving among people.

2. It is also conducive to speed of mental movement. This is owing to the fact that the act of composing goes on when the preacher's mind, his entire being, is in a glow, induced by sympathetic contact with an interested and listening audience. It will be likely to be, however, a mental movement more superficial and general than that of the writer and reader of discourses.

II. Advantages to His Preaching

1. It is the method of delivery most favorable to the emphasis of the preacher's physical presence and gesture.

   The entire physique is most free and natural. The audience gets the full value of the expression of the preacher's face and particularly of his eye, as they respond to the varying moods of his soul in the passion of delivery. "The face is the speech of the body, and the eye is the emphasis of the face."

   The preacher has the unfettered use of his body, hands, throat. Freedom of the hands is an important matter in impressive delivery. In reading, one hand at least must be more or less in bondage. A preacher reading from manuscript the sentence, "Let justice be done, though the heavens fall!" made a sweeping gesture with the left hand, keeping the right hand at the place, as "if what he had written must be held fast whatever became of the heavens."

2. The extemporaneous mode of delivery is most favorable to the idea of conversation in preaching.

   The conversational idea is fundamental in the highest effectiveness of public discourse.

The preacher is, in essence, carrying on a dialogue with his hearers. He speaks and they talk back. It is difficult to impart this characteristic to the reading of a sermon from a manuscript. It is difficult not to have it partake of the nature of a monologue. An analysis of the sermons of the most successful preachers discovers the prominence of the conversational quality. It belonged to the preaching of such men as Chrysostom, Bunyan, and Baxter.

Dr. M. B. Riddle says: "In editing Chrysostom I have been struck by the frequency with which he introduces objections or queries, 'phesin,' he says, is the word. While his homilies are continuous, there is a constant ideal interlocutory process."

Professor Goodrich remarks that "almost every great orator has been distinguished for his conversational powers." The implication being that this fact colored the method of his orations. Now, of course, this characteristic is not necessarily incongruous with the reading of a sermon. If the preacher has a lively imagination and is able to summon his hearers about him as he writes, he may, to some extent, carry on a conversation with them, and so impart

a conversational style to the delivery of the sermon from manuscript. But it is clear that the preacher who has the privilege of doing this face to face with an audience that is stirred to responsiveness while he speaks, has the decided advantage in this regard. But even the extemporizer must gain facility in this by practice. For even he may more readily see an audience rather than individual hearers.

3. There is a directness, a naturalness, a realness, an intensity, a warmth in extemporaneous delivery which it is difficult to convey to the other methods.

The written sermon is in danger of having the remoteness, the indirectness, the impersonality of the book and not the foregoing qualities of a speech. Earnest preachers have frequently felt this.

Mr. Wilberforce characterized Robert Hall's method as the viviparous method, as opposed to the oviparous process of the written sermon.

Cotton Mather: "If you must have your notes before you in preaching, yet let there be with you a distinction between the neat using of notes and the dull reading of them. Keep up the air and life of

speaking, and put not off your hearers with a heavy reading to them. What I advise you to is, let your notes be little other than a quiver on which you may cast your eye now and then to see what arrow is to be next fetched from thence and then, with your eye as much as may be on them whom you speak to, let it be shot away with a vivacity of one in earnest for to have the truth well entertained with the auditory."

Dr. Storrs changed from reading to the extemporaneous method with "a desire to make public discourse more natural, free, and flexibly vigorous, less literary in tone, more direct and energetic."

4. It calls forth the "admiration" of some of the people for the preacher's "independence of artificial helps."

In our day this class will probably contain a large majority of the hearers, certainly about all of the less discriminating. Whereas reading is pretty sure to command the respect of the most sensitive, who are in fear of the preacher's partial or complete failure, and also of some of the most intelligent, who think that the presence of the manuscript is evidence of faithfulness of preparation, and

so of valuable thought and accuracy of statement.

Brooks: "A rough backwoodsman in Virginia heard Bishop Meade preach an extemporaneous sermon, and being somewhat unfamiliar with the ways of the Episcopal Church, he said: 'He liked him. He was the first one he ever saw of those petticoat fellows that could shoot without a rest.'"

5. It has the intellectual advantage of the preacher's striking out new thoughts in the movement and glow of the mind in speaking. This is a decided advantage. But it is conditioned always upon the thorough preparation of the sermon; for unpremeditated thoughts are usually valuable in proportion to the quality of the preparation. They are not purely extemporaneous; they are the fruit of a mind tense with previous struggles at thinking. The better the preparation, the more striking the unpremeditated thoughts.[1]

Scott: "The degree in which, after the most careful preparation for the pulpit, new thoughts, new arguments, animated addresses, often flow into my mind while

[1] Appendix XIII.

speaking to a congregation, even on very common subjects, makes me feel as if I were quite another man than when poring over them in my study. There will be inaccuracies, but generally the most striking things in my sermons were unpremeditated."

6. It is most effective in producing immediate evangelistic impression.

There seems to be a kind of incongruity between reading or reciting a sermon and a severely evangelistic aim. In his effort to secure immediate personal decision, the preacher is not particularly concerned with the intellect and the taste of the hearer, and so his preaching does not call for the calmness, the elaborateness, the finish, characteristic of the written sermon. His work is, in a sense, a narrower one. He is making assault upon the will. Consequently, he has to do chiefly with awakening the conscience and stirring the feelings. Effective dealing with them in the compassing of his purpose requires in his sermon directness and pungency, and in himself an offhand, earnest manner and a totally unfettered personality, in order that he may grapple with his hearer with all possible persuasiveness of personal will

power. And these are qualities peculiar to the extempore delivery. Dr. Payson thought his extemporaneous sermons the most useful. Dr. Chalmers' extemporaneous weekday evening addresses in St. John's parish, Glasgow, were among his most eloquent and impressive, as he was bent on the one object of winning souls to Christ.

In times of spiritual quickening, preachers instinctively turn away from the use of the manuscript. It would seem to be incongruous for an evangelist to read a sermon. All evangelists use the extemporaneous mode of delivery, or essentially so.

FIVE CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS IN EXTEMPORANEOUS PREACHING

1. Begin this method at once and stick to it.

Storrs (quoting Gilbert Stuart concerning how to learn to paint and giving his words a homiletic application): "Just as puppies are taught to swim — chuck them in."

The conscientious extemporizer finds numerous difficulties in his path. It is surpassingly difficult to become an effective extemporaneous preacher. The recognition of this goes far toward achieving mastery. For instance,

slips in logic, in grammar, and in expression are bound to occur, and it is easy for the conscientious preacher to become discouraged in the use of this method. Let him remember that he is probably more sensitive to defects than his hearers are, and he should not be remorselessly severe with himself. Let him adopt Whitefield's method and press right on: "Never to take back anything in delivery unless it were wicked."

2. Thoroughly prepare the material of discourse.[1]

Broadus: "Perhaps the greatest of all the disadvantages of extemporaneous speaking consists in the tendency to neglect of preparation after one has gained facility in unaided thinking and extemporaneous expression."

Wildinson: "Trust everything to preparation; trust nothing to inspiration."

Edison: "Genius is two per cent inspiration and ninety-eight per cent perspiration."

Storrs (quoting a German who was pushed in his trial to change his evidence): "No, I cannot change it, for it is all mixed up mit my mind."

3. Carefully and constantly enrich expression.

Next to the danger of lack of preparation of the

[1] Appendix XIV.

materials stands that of poverty of diction, the repetition of pet words and phrases and a general lack of mastery of the forces of expression. The extemporaneous preacher, if he wishes to remain fresh, interesting, and impressive, should be a constant student of the best English literature.

4. In delivery be dominated by the practical object of the sermon.

   This tends to keep the preacher speaking to the point, and is an aid to logical order of thought and directness, conciseness and vigor of style.

5. When it is time to quit, quit.

   The temptation to undue length of discourse is strong. Resist it. As it has been bluntly put: "Stand up, speak up, shut up."

CHAPTER VI

THE MAKING OF THE DISCOURSE

I. The Work Prior to the Composing of the Discourse

1. The preparation of the materials.
   (1) The text is to be critically studied, as to its meaning and its homiletic subject.
   Usually the thrifty preacher has performed this task long before he needs to use the text in the pulpit. Out of the sphere of his general study, that has no reference to the next Sunday's sermon, he has supplied himself with a number of texts that are ready to his hand when he comes to prepare a particular discourse. For the thorough mastery of the text he should call to his aid the best critical helps, such as the concordance, lexicon, grammar.
   (2) The materials should be those which have been most thoroughly premeditated.
   Sometimes there is an exception to this. A plan and suitable materials will flash

upon the mind, and are the best for immediate use. But the working rule of a ministry is, the more thoroughly the subject matter has been digested in the general preparation for preaching the better it is. This thoroughness of mediate preparation makes the sermon a growth, rather than a mechanism. The preacher has had time and opportunity for judging of the best proportions and perspective of the truths to be presented, and of their fitness and value for an audience. Such materials are characterized by substantialness as opposed to the superficialness of unpremeditated material, and they impart to the delivery of the sermon that valuable oratorical quality of reserved power. As Phillips Brooks says: "The less special preparation that is needed for a sermon, the better the sermon is. Some preachers are always preaching the last book which they have read, and their congregations always find it out. The feeling of superficialness and thinness attaches to all they do."

This thoroughness of general preparation saves the preacher from the hurry, the

worry, the wearing physical and mental strain of seeking for materials under the exciting pressure of the certain, swift, and dreadful approach of the next Sunday.

(3) The materials should be those that have entered deepest into the preacher's own life.

The true sermon is in the preacher, not in the manuscript. In the best sense the most effective preaching is biographical. Not that the preacher retails to the people the particular items of his personal experience, but his discourse is the outflow, the overflow of what the truth has done for him in his deepest self. Robertson and Brooks were such preachers, which largely accounted for their peculiar power.

(4) The materials are to be organized into a plan.

The plan may be more or less detailed, minute, before the preacher begins to write. It is at least "to blaze the path through the woods."

A. P. Peabody: "Map out your divisions and mode of treatment before you put pen to paper."

Dr. Chalmers' method, as given by his son-in-law, Dr. Hanna, is ideal. It is worthy of adoption by every preacher. "His processes of thought were slow — slow but ardent, like Rousseau's — but thorough. This slow and deliberate habit of thinking gave him a great advantage when the act of composition came to be performed. He never had the double task to do at once of thinking what he should say and how he should say it. The one was over before the other commenced. He never began to write till, in its subjects and the order and proportion of its parts, the map or outline of the future composition was laid down so distinctly, and, as it were, authoritatively, that it was seldom violated. When engaged, therefore, in writing, his whole undivided strength was given to the best and most powerful expression of pre-established ideas."

2. The Preacher's Self-preparation.

It has been extravagantly said that "the thing of least consequence in preaching is the sermon." It is not extravagant to say that

the thing of greatest consequence in preaching is the preparation of the preacher himself in the making of the sermon. It has been remarked of Bishop Wilberforce in connection with his Confirmation addresses that "the preparation was rather of himself than of that which he was about to utter. His whole bearing, voice and gesture, eye and countenance were transfigured by the thought or feeling which possessed him. The living man as he stood before you was, almost without words, the expression of that feeling."

Mr. Pepper, speaking as a layman in his Yale lectures, "A Voice from the Crowd," says: "While the careful preparation of the discourse is a duty which the speaker must by no means omit, yet the careful preparation of himself is the more important matter of the two."

The preacher's self-preparation for making the sermon involves the following considerations, which are offered, not with the idea that the preacher is to have them specifically and distinctly in consciousness every time he prepares a discourse, but rather as indicating his abiding homiletic temper.

(1) Am I physically, intellectually, and spiritually prepared to make this sermon? If not, I will try to become so.

a. Physical Fitness.

This is grounded in the fact, increasingly recognized in effective modern preaching, that the entire man gets into the sermon. A fine and subtle physical quality goes out from a preacher in robust bodily health into the product of his brain and heart that is a pronounced force in persuasive preaching. The physiology of preaching, as it might be termed, must receive more and more attention in our times. Keeping himself in vigorous physical tone is one of the modern preacher's first duties.

b. Intellectual Fitness.

This includes (*a*) the mastery of the materials of discourse, (*b*) the mental temper for the invention of suitable expression.

It not infrequently happens that, after a preacher has the materials well in hand, his mind is strangely paralyzed in the sphere of composition. He cannot write; his ideas refuse to get

expressed. In such a situation the reading of a quickening author may release the ability to compose, and the preacher will begin and continue to write with utmost freedom and delight. Many a preacher has found this simple device of great value.

c. Spiritual Fitness.[1]

The influence of the Holy Spirit upon the preacher in the making of the sermon is as essential as in the delivery of it. Without such influence the product is not a sermon, no matter how perfect its order, or how eloquent its style. Earnest prayer and spiritual meditation should accompany the preparation as the delivery of the discourse. Metaphorically, every sermon should be made with a preacher on his knees. Spurgeon: "Prepare your heart, then your sermon." Trumbull: "No preparation of a sermon is complete until the preacher is prepared in his heart to feel the truth as vital to his very life."

Professor Allen's account of Phillips Brooks' method of preparation is

[1] Appendix XV.

highly suggestive to every true preacher: "He first opened his soul to the influence of the truth which was to constitute his message, devising the most forcible method in order to make it appeal to his own heart, and then under the influence of this conviction he wrote his sermon. He studied its effect upon himself before studying how to reach a congregation. This process kept him natural, sincere, and unaffected, preserving his personality in all that he said, and free from the dangers of conventionalism or artificiality." Thus he was true to his definition of preaching "truth through personality," and he fulfilled in himself his requirement: "The preparation for the ministry must be nothing less than the kneading and tempering of a man's whole nature till it becomes of such consistency and quality as to be capable of transmission."

(2) I desire and intend that every sermon I make shall be for use.

This desire and intention of the preacher delivers him from false aims in the con-

struction of discourse. It tends to impart to the sermon a pronounced spiritual purpose and quality that saves it from undue intellectuality, and makes it more impressive and persuasive.

Spurgeon: "Never begin to prepare till you have clearly decided whether you want to gain men's praise or save men's souls."

(3) What use do I propose to make of this sermon?[1]

Effective preaching consists in securing an object, rather than in unfolding a subject. The expert hunter of game teaches an indispensable homiletic lesson: "A Briton and a Boer went out shooting deer for food. The Briton took a case of cartridges with him, the Boer took one. 'Why,' asked the Briton, 'do you take only one cartridge?' 'Because,' was the reply, 'I want only one deer.'" The true preacher always remembers the target as well as the shot.

Horne: "The test of a good sermon is not that it satisfies canons of style, but that it achieves certain moral and spiritual ends."

[1] Appendix XVI.

According to an English journal, a minister, who could not secure the charge of a church, once implored Joseph Parker to explain the reason of this difficulty. He was scholarly, studious, well informed, willing to work; but no church would look at him. He offered to stand up in the corner of Dr. Parker's study and preach his best sermon. At the end of the performance, Dr. Parker delivered his verdict. It was brief, incisive, and summary. "Now I can tell you," he said, "why you cannot get a church. For the last half hour you have not been trying to get something into my mind, but something off yours; that is the reason."

(4) I am determined not to fetter myself with the notion that I must make a "great sermon."

This does not mean that the preacher is not to grapple with great subjects, but that he is not to be obsessed with the unholy ambition to do what it is not in him to do at a given date. Quintilian tells of the advice that Julius Florus gave to his nephew, Julius Secundus, who was on his third day in his effort to find

a suitable exordium for a subject, and who was discouraged for the present effort, and in despair with reference to the future. "Do you wish to write better than you can?" "Melius dicere vis quam potes?"

Robert Hall used to say: "I am tormented with the desire of writing better than I can." By endeavoring to make a sermon that is clearly beyond the preacher's present ability to make he stretches the bow of his mind beyond its normal tension, and it loses its elasticity. The result is that the sermon has a strained, unnatural, and even thin quality. It is far from being "great."

(5) And yet I am determined to make this sermon the best possible product of my present life and power.

That is to say, the Christian preacher should always aim to do his best. It has been sometimes remarked of popular preachers, especially those of the more sensational type, that they deliberately intend to produce a great effort about once a month and in the meantime fill in with "chips and sawdust." This is

positive and unpardonable homiletic wickedness. Suppose these men, if such there are, after having consciously and deliberately preached below their normal level should be suddenly summoned into the presence of their Master to render up their homiletic account, with what shamefacedness would they be covered! Baxter: "I preached as never sure to preach again and as a dying man to dying men."

(6) I will try to see and to feel my audience as I write.

This tends to impart reality, point, fervor, and vividness to discourse. It has been said of Phillips Brooks that as he sat in his study writing his sermon it was as if his hearers were before him. He probably possessed this power in exceptional measure. But it is a power that every preacher can cultivate. It has been remarked of Dr. Roswell D. Hitchcock that he used to write his sermons out loud in order that they might be concrete and freed from artificiality.

II. The Work of Composing the Discourse

Emerson: "It is one of the laws of composition that, let the preparation have been how elaborate, how extended soever, the moment of casting is yet not less critical, not the less all-important moment on which the whole success depends."

1. Do not defer the work of composition till late in the week.

In this day of multifarious demands upon the minister, especially if he is young and a novice in sermon writing, the habit of postponing the making of the sermon puts too great a strain upon him and damages the quality of discourse. Unless he is made of iron he will be physically fagged when he delivers his sermon, and in our time this will never do.

Carlyle: "Edward Irving's uniform custom was to shut himself up all Saturday, became invisible all that day; and had his sermon ready before going to bed, sermons an hour long or more; it could not be done in one day except as a kind of extempore thing."

2. Write as much as possible at a single sitting.

The continuousness of composition imparts

to it, as Shedd says: "A certain flow and flood."

Carlyle: "Such swiftness of mere writing after due energy of preparation is doubtless the right method; the hot furnace having long worked and simmered, let the pure gold flow out at one gush."

3. "Write with fury"; that is, write rapidly provided always that you write with reasonable accuracy.[1]

"Facility is the result of forgotten toil."

Quintilian: "Let our pen be at first slow, provided that it be accurate. By writing quickly we are not brought to write well, but by writing well we are brought to write quickly."

Virgil used to say of himself that he licked his verses into shape as bears licked their cubs.

4. Do not stop to correct while in the glow of composition.

5. If composition grows slow and tedious, stop and read what you have written. This process tends to impart to the mind a fresh impetus toward writing, somewhat as the leaper runs over a certain ground that with gathered velocity he may leap the farther.

[1] Appendix XVII.

III. The Work Subsequent to the Composing of the Discourse

1. The work of correction. "Correct with phlegm," that is, with coldness, deliberateness, criticalness, provided always that you do not abnormally find fault with your work. This includes:

   (1) The method of the sermon.

   It not infrequently happens that the changing of the order of the main divisions greatly improves the method, and it may be about all the criticism that is called for.

   (2) The separate words with a view to clearness and vividness.

   Cut out abstract words and insert concrete words. Avoid slang, but use the vernacular. This may quite change the atmosphere of the sermon, making it the product of a public speaker rather than of a scholar.

   (3) Clauses and sentences with reference to the economizing of the attention of the hearers.

   See on this point Spencer's "The Philosophy of Style," and read in connection with it the qualification named by Hill

in his "Principles of Rhetoric," page 164.

This is one of the most vital aspects of sermon criticism.

Detect and correct the false construction of the following sentences:

Nowhere in St. Paul's Epistles is a warmer expression to be found, of exuberant thanksgiving and happiness.

It was the presbyters' duty to turn back those who had gone astray from the error of their ways.

We should think it unseemly to criticize the last word of one who has performed so many useful services to literature with extreme severity.

The President had only been here a few minutes.

At any instant, day or night, an explosion may blow the vessel which supports you to fragments.

The Austrians and Germans are pushing their three great attacks against the Russian Armies defending Warsaw with undiminished energy.

Lay daily the unconscious impress of a high and noble character upon his friend.

A correspondent will describe how Tommy Atkins gets his breakfast in one of our early numbers.

The Board of Education has resolved to erect a building large enough to accommodate 500 pupils three stories high.

Richard Grant White used to call the English language the "Grammarless Tongue," and so it is. Consequently, in order to achieve clearness and exactness of style great care must be exercised as to the location in sentences of words and clauses. This is one of the most delicate and rewarding of the preacher's critical tasks. It requires and cultivates a feeling for style, which is one of the finest homiletic assets.

2. The preacher getting the sermon and himself ready for its delivery.

Observe that this is concerned with a later stage in the preparation of the sermon than self-preparation in writing the sermon.

It includes:

(1) Mastering the manuscript, if the sermon is to be read.

Hague: "Always be master of your manuscript; never allow it to master you."

(2) The intellectual mastery of the material and the order of thought, if the sermon is to be delivered extemporaneously.

(3) The preacher's personal spiritual preparation for delivering the sermon.

Skinner: "There is no action more full of spirituality than the just delivery of an evangelical sermon. The shortcoming, therefore, in preparation to preach, however elaborate and complete, is radical, if the preacher has omitted to prepare himself."

Ponder afresh the truth of the sermon until it takes complete possession of you and is colored by your own heart's blood; until your whole personality is filled with it, and is swayed by it. Then it will be winged with power and persuasion in the delivery. It has been said of John Knox that he was sermon-possessed, which accounted for his impressiveness in the pulpit.

Bishop Gregg: "There are three things to aim at in public speaking; first to get into your subject, then to get your subject into yourself, and lastly to get your subject into your hearers."

Spurgeon's amazing power largely centered in the flaming spiritual passion that went out of his own soul into his preaching. No finer tribute was ever

paid to one great preacher by another than that of MacLaren to Spurgeon: "I have been reading a number of Spurgeon's sermons and have been wonderfully helped and stirred by them. There is a passion of love and a grand fullness of trust in Christ which have stirred and rebuked me."

Does the foregoing presentation of the making of the sermon leave the impression that the process is too minute, and the task too difficult? If increasing efficiency in communicating saving truth in pulpit discourse is a preacher's ideal and holy ambition, this is the price to be paid.

This study cannot be more fittingly closed than by giving the testimony of two of the world's greatest preachers concerning the preparation of sermons.

Chalmers: "I preached yesterday to a full house, and it gratifies me to think that labor expended on a sermon does not render it the less but the more acceptable."

Brooks: "I have been thinking of one whom I knew — nay, one whom I know — his own brother — who finished his preaching years ago and went to God. How does all this seem to him? — these rules and regulations of the preacher's art, which he once studied as we are studying them now. Let us not doubt that, while he has seen a glory and strength in the truth which we preach such as we never have conceived, he has seen also that no expedient which

can make that truth a little more effective in its presentation to the world is trivial, or undignified, or unworthy of the patient care and study of the minister of Christ." [1]

[1] Appendix XVIII.

APPENDIX

I

THOMAS ARNOLD: "I should advise the constant use of the biography of good men."

CARLYLE: "There is no heroic poem but is at bottom a biography, the life of a man; and there is no life of a man, faithfully recorded, but is a heroic poem of its sort, rhymed or unrhymed. Biography is the most universally pleasant, universally profitable of all reading."

EMERSON: "There is no history, only biography. An institution is but the lengthened shadow of a man. All history resolves itself very easily into biography of a few stout and earnest persons."

ANDREW D. WHITE: "It may be allowed to a hard-worked man who has passed beyond the allotted threescore years and ten to say that he has found in general religious biography, Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant, and in the writings of men nobly inspired in all these fields, a help without which his life would have been poor indeed."

WASHINGTON GLADDEN: "Biographical studies have opened many productive fields; there is no more effective or convincing presentation of saving truth than that which is given in the life of a good man or woman, and nothing is more profoundly interesting to

any sort of audience. Best of all books for the pastor are the good biographies. Many successful pastors bear testimony that they have found more stimulus in books of this class than in any other kind of literature. Now, as always, life is the light of men."

G. H. MORRISON: "I have through my life been a reader of biographies, which I take to be the most fruitful of all reading."

JOHN CLIFFORD: "A powerful witness to the interest that there is in human life is the fact that nothing stirs us so deeply or helps us so abidingly as biography. The story of the building up of a man from base to superstructure still enthralls us, and howsoever differently literature may be classified as poetry or as philosophy, as history or as romance, the golden thread that runs through it, and that constitutes its perennial charm, is biography. To look into a man's life, and see the stock of ideas with which he starts; to recognize the difficulties that he has to face, and that facing, he conquers; to watch him through his successful struggles, sympathetic with his falls, and desirous that he may not only escape falling again, but may derive from these falls inspirations to ascend, we find ourselves led on from stage to stage in the man's career, more and more enriched by what is presented to us, and inspired by what we ourselves hope to profit by."

J. H. JOWETT, it is said, always has a book of biography on his study table because it gives him "the Gospel in real life."

PHILLIPS BROOKS, in "Essays and Addresses," has a valuable address on biography, page 452.

PROFESSOR CURRIER, in his introduction to the volume, "Nine Great Preachers," has several suggestive pages on biography, pages 3–28.

II

The testimonies and examples concerning hard work as essential to success are drawn from various fields of endeavor.

1. *Literature.* PRESIDENT ELIOT on Francis Parkman, the historian: "Parkman's health was his enemy, and rigid and constant attention to his vocation was a physical impossibility. He could rarely keep his mind for more than twenty minutes at a time upon a given occupation. But he made use of the moments and accomplished wonders in the results attained. His career is a model for students in virtue of the patience and endurance shown and the grand final achievements." Mr. Cross, the husband of George Eliot, remarks that she had "the enormous faculty of taking pains." And she herself has said: "What courage and patience are wanted for every life that aims to produce anything!"

2. *Art.* SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS: "You must have no dependence on your own genius. If you have great talents, industry will improve them; if you have but moderate abilities, industry will supply their deficiency. Nothing is denied to well-directed labor; nothing is to be attained without it."

3. *Statesmanship.* DANIEL WEBSTER, applying to himself the words of Alexander Hamilton: "Men give me some credit for genius. All the genius I have lies just in this: when I have a subject in hand I study it profoundly. Day and night it is before me. I explore it in all its bearings. My mind becomes pervaded with it. Then the effort which I make the people are pleased to call the fruit of genius. It is the fruit of labor and thought."

JOHN MORLEY on Gladstone: "Toil was his native element; and though he found himself possessed of many inborn gifts, he was never visited by the dream so fatal to many a well-laden argosy, that genius alone does all. There was nobody like him when it came to difficult business for bending his whole strength to it, like a mighty archer stringing a stiff bow."

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS in his Eulogy of Charles Sumner: "His classmates in Harvard College, gayly returning late at night, saw the studious light shining in his window. The boy was hard at work, already in those plastic years storing his mind and memory, which seemed indeed 'an inability to forget,' with the literature and historic lore which gave his later discourse such amplitude and splendor of illustration.

"He never lost this vast capacity for work, and his life had no idle hours. Long afterwards, when he was in Paris, recovering from the blow in the Senate, ordered not to think or read, and daily, as his physician lately tells us, undergoing a torture of treatment which he refused to mitigate by anesthetics, simply unable

to do nothing, he devoted himself to the study and collection of engravings, in which he became an expert. And I remember in the midsummer of 1871, when he remained, as was his custom, in Washington, after the city was deserted by all but its local population, and when I saw him daily, that he rose at seven in the morning and with but a slight breakfast at nine sat at his desk in the library hard at work until five in the afternoon. It was his vacation; the weather was tropical; and he was sixty years old. The renowned Senator at his post was still the solitary midnight student of the College."

4. *Law.* RUFUS CHOATE: "One of Choate's most remarkable traits of character was his unresting, unflagging industry, coupled with a readiness to make any and every sacrifice of his own likings or enjoyment to the one great object of securing the highest position in his profession. This was with him no vulgar ambition, but simply a love of, and a desire for, perfection. Great and brilliant as were his talents, his success was largely due to his profound and constant studies."

5. *The Stage.* ELLEN TERRY on Sir Henry Irving: "Only a great actor finds the difficulties of the actor's art infinite. Even up to the last five years of his life, Henry Irving was striving, striving. He never rested on old triumphs, never found a part in which there was no more to do."

6. *The Ministry.* NORMAN MCLEOD: "I feel convinced that every man has given him of God much more than he has any idea of, and that he can help

on the world's work more than he knows of. What we want is the single eye that will see what our work is, the humility to accept it, however lowly, the faith to do it for God, the perseverance to go on till death."

ROBERT W. DALE: "It is four and twenty years since I left college, and the temptations to desultoriness which I have either yielded to or mastered would enable me to go on for four and twenty hours with the study of the perils which will beset you as soon as you leave these walls."

From an article in *The Independent* by a prominent preacher: "My father bequeathed to me no legacy save only his capacity for industry. But if there is one chief requisite for success in my profession it is this; and if there is one reason above all others for failure it is in the lack of it in many, which lack is a loathsome thing, for it is laziness. I work more hours in the day than any of my people; I work, as must all clergymen, seven days in the week; I work the hardest when my people have most leisure; while even my vacations, although long, considering, must all be spent in work, preparing for next season, reading, studying, and writing. If any one in this calling complains, search here for the reason before you look elsewhere."

SAMUEL B. CAPEN, the eminent Boston layman, to a company of ministers: "Will you allow me to say that there is quite a prevalent idea that many of the pulpits would have more power if the preachers had more method? I have known cases where men wasted their time the first of the week, to be driven at the

end almost to distraction, sometimes way into Sabbath morning, in getting through their preparations. Such shiftlessness would ruin any modern business. One of our most popular preachers once told me that he was always very careful to get started early, plan to lay out his work and get to a certain point by the middle of the week and then he knew he was all right. My wife can pack twice as much into a trunk as I can, for she knows how to economize the space better. The man that methodically and systematically economizes his time can pack twice as much work into a year. One of the ministers that I know best, and who does grand work in all directions, owes much of his success to his method. Why could Garfield, at a few hours' notice, make an exhaustive speech on almost any theme? Carefully accumulating material, methodically arranging it by subject, he was always the master of any occasion. The work of the ministry is too noble to be injured by carelessness. The same precision and method which is needed in every mercantile business ought to be yours."

J. H. JOWETT: The Preacher. "The Preacher in His Study," p. 113.

III

AMIEL in his Journal: "If I have any special power of appreciating different shades of mind I owe it no doubt to the analysis I have so perpetually and unsuccessfully practiced on myself. In fact, I have always regarded myself as matter for study, and what has

interested me most in myself has been the pleasure of having under my hand a man, a person in whom, as an authentic specimen of human nature, I could follow, without importunity or indiscretion, all the metamorphoses, the secret thoughts, the heartbeats, and the temptations of humanity."

EMERSON in his "Man Thinking": "He learned that in going down into the secrets of his own mind, he has descended into the secrets of all minds. The deeper the orator dives into his privatest, secretest presentiment, to his wonder he finds, this is the most acceptable, most public, and universally true. The people delight in it; the better part of every man feels, This is my music; this is myself." In his "Spiritual Laws" he quotes Sidney's maxim: "'Look in thy heart and write. He that writes to himself writes to an eternal public.'"

IV

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS: "As he who does not know himself does not know others, so it may be said, with equal truth, that he who does not know others, knows himself but very imperfectly."

IAN MACLAREN: "The minister ought to be soaked in life; not that his sermons may never escape from local details, but rather that, being in contact with the life nearest him, he may state his gospel in terms of human experience."

HENRY WARD BEECHER: "My impression is that preachers are quite as well acquainted with human

nature as the average of well-informed citizens, but far less than lawyers, or merchants, or teachers, or especially politicians."

V

PHELPS: "That was not a wise man who, in the time of the Civil War, in a southwestern state, commenced a sermon by laying a revolver on the pulpit by the side of the Bible, saying that his life had been threatened and that he was prepared to defend it, as he would against a mad dog. A humble Massachusetts chaplain was his superior in homiletic tact, who was compelled by General Butler to preach to a wealthy Presbyterian congregation of Confederates in Norfolk, who were also in their seats on the Sabbath morning, in obedience to military order. Said the preacher in commencing his discourse: 'My friends, I am here by no choice of my own. I came to your city as a chaplain to look after the souls of my neighbors who are here, as I am, under military rule. I stand in the place of your honored pastor by command of my military superior; but I am a preacher of the same Christ whom you possess, and I ask you to hear me for His sake.' He had a respectful hearing for the next three months." And no wonder. That approach showed homiletic genius of the highest order. No finer example could be found. Every clause and word of it will bear the most critical analysis.

VI

ALEXANDER: "They should be great themes — the greatest themes. The great questions which we should like to have settled before we die—which we should ask an Apostle about if he were here. These are to general Scripture truth what great mountains are in geography. A man should begin early to grapple with great themes. An athlete gains might by great exertions; so that a man does not overcome his powers, the more he wrestles the better, but he must wrestle, and not merely take a great subject and dream over it or play with it.

ROBINSON: "Depend on it, no subject you can handle is so difficult, and no thought you can have on it so profound, but that if the thinking be clear to yourself, you can make both your subject and your thoughts on it clear to others. The truth is, all sound minds at bottom are rational. Every man's self-respect is appealed to when his reason is addressed; and every man, however much he may for the moment be pleased with the mere tickling of his fancy, will resent it in the end with revulsion of feeling as if he had been imposed upon. Lettered and unlettered alike will listen to clear, just thought, and they will be sure to come again for more. Sheep will follow a basket of corn, but not a basket of leaves."

BROOKS: "Great utterance of great truths, great enforcement of great duties, as distinct from the minute and subtle and ingenious treatment of little topics,

side issues of the soul's life, bits of anatomy, the bric-a-brac of theology. Turn to Barrow or Tillotson or Bushnell — 'Of being imitators of Christ.' 'That God is the only happiness of man.' 'Every man's life a plan of God.' When the preacher lays vigorous hold of these great truths of his message, and they lay sovereign hold on him, he comes out on to open ground. His work grows freer and bolder and broader. He loves the simplest truths which run like rivers through all life. God's sovereignty, Christ's Redemption, man's hope in the Spirit, the privilege of duty, the love of man in the Savior, make the strong music which his soul tries to catch."

He himself deals in such subjects as, The Withheld Completions of Life, The Soul's Refuge in God, The Food of Man.

VII

WHATELY: "Those who place before themselves a term instead of a proposition imagine that because they are treating of one thing, they are discussing one question. Unpracticed composers are apt to fancy that they shall have the greater abundance of matter the wider extent of subject they comprehend; but experience shows that the reverse is the fact. The more general and extensive view will often suggest nothing to the mind but vague and trite remarks; when, upon narrowing the field of discussion, many interesting questions of detail present themselves."

DAY: "Invention is an originating, creative process

in its essential nature. As such it is the most proper and delightful work of a rational being, and whenever it is pursued imparts a pleasure which itself fires anew the energy of the inventive faculty. It is specific views that furnish the occasion of original invention. In them the writer shuns the general commonplace notions that are familiar to all. The more specific and definite, therefore, the theme, the easier will be the work of invention. Caution only is necessary that the field of view be not too limited for the writer's power of invention, since only the most vigorous and practiced writer can take the most minute and particular views."

VIII

VINET: "Order is the character of true discourse; there is no discourse without it. The difference between a common orator and an eloquent man is often nothing but a difference in respect of disposition. Disposition may be eloquent in itself, and on close examination we shall often see that invention taken by itself, and viewed as far as it can be apart from disposition, is a comparatively feeble intellectual force. Order is in itself beautiful, and everything beautiful in itself is more beautiful in its place. Without a plan, strongly conceived, whether slowly meditated or found as soon as sought, one cannot write with a true inspiration."

HERDER (quoted by Vinet): "I readily forgive all faults except those which relate to disposition."

BAUTAIN: "He who knows not how to form a well-conceived, deeply considered, and seriously elaborated plan will never speak in a living or an effective manner. He may become a rhetorician; he will never be an orator."

GENUNG (speaking of a literary production of which the essay is the norm): "In all the art of composition there is perhaps no more frequent source of misapprehension, on the part of young writers, than this matter of the plan. The structure of a finished literary work, as it lies before them for perusal, seems so natural, so inevitable, that they easily get the idea that it never was made, but sprang mature from the author's brain, as Pallas sprang from the brain of Jove. And so they imagine they have only to surrender their thinking to its own unguided vagaries, trusting that earnestness and enthusiasm will make everything come out right. But thought does not shape itself spontaneously. Nor will it find its natural order without the trained and vigorous working of the writer's best calculating powers. This is the universal testimony of those who have achieved eminence in writing. And rigid analysis of any literary work that leaves a definite and rememberable impression on the reader's mind reveals the invariable fact of a skillfully laid plan; that is, it is found that both main and minor thoughts follow one another according to natural laws of association, and bear the marks of intentional and studious arrangement."

CARLYLE: "Edward Irving had more thoughts than

Chalmers, but they were not organized like his. Chalmers' method was the triumphant onrush of one idea with its satellites and supporters. But Irving's wanted its definite head and backbone. That was mostly a defect one felt in traversing those grand forest avenues of his, with their multifarious outlooks to right and left. He had many thoughts, pregnantly expressed, but they did not tend all one way. The reason was, there were in him infinitely more thoughts than in Chalmers and he took far less pains in setting them forth."

A. P. PEABODY: "I had, not long ago, an unsought conversation with a wise and devout layman, a constant and loving churchgoer, who said to me, 'The sermons of some of our brightest young ministers have no backbone, no vertebræ. They sound well, but when the sermon is over, I have no idea what the preacher has been driving at.' There seems to me more truth in this than there ought to be. I would say to the young minister: Never begin to write a sermon till you see through it — till you have its subject, aim, purpose, drift so distinctly defined in your own mind that you could state it in words which every one could understand."

IX

RUSKIN: "The divisions of a church are much like the divisions of a sermon; they are always right so long as they are necessary to edification, and always wrong when they are thrust upon the attention as

divisions only. There may be neatness in carving when there is richness in feasting; but I have heard many a discourse and seen many a church wall in which it was all carving and no meat."

THEREMIN: "The orator may announce the two or three parts which contain the development proper; for why should he not carefully employ this, as well as every other opportunity, to aid the hearer's attention, and to facilitate his comprehension of the whole?"

BROOKS: "I think that most congregations welcome, and are not offended by, clear, precise statements of the course which a sermon is going to pursue, carefully marked divisions of its thoughts. Give your sermon an orderly consistent progress, and do not hesitate to let your hearers see it distinctly, for it will help them to remember what you say."

The best example of this precept in his own preaching is found in his volume of sermons entitled "Sermons for the Church Year."

X

SCHOTT: "An animated, compressed, forcible repetition of the most important parts of a discourse, such a repetition as will give to the hearer an instantaneous, a comprehensive, and an affecting view of the entire theme, such as shall combine in itself all the power which has pervaded the preceding divisions, and unite in one focus their enlightening and warming rays, is an essential aid to the hearer's intellect, in particular to his memory, and is also a persuasive appeal to his

will. Nothing can be more appropriate in the finale of a sermon."

XI

The Independent: "Men are invited to church to view Christ much as men are invited to visit a picture gallery to view the pictures without reference to purchase. How different the character of a company called together to visit a fine collection of pictures, and the company that are brought together on the day when these same pictures are offered for sale under the auctioneer's hammer without reserve! Our ordinary congregations are only spectators of the mental picture set before them of the uplifted Christ, not a company of men brought together for the purpose of considering the immediate business of buying 'without money and without price' 'the wine and milk' of eternal life. This is an age of urgent business habit both in thought and life. The bulk of men are given to business. If they are to be won to Christ the man who is put in trust with the Gospel must himself not only 'mean business,' but he must convince his hearers that he 'means business,' that he has business with them on God's behalf."

EMMONS: It may be reasonably questioned whether in the history of the American pulpit there has stood in it a man, with the possible exception of Jonathan Edwards, who made upon his hearers a more startling and powerful impression than Nathaniel Emmons. He has left on record his method of doing it. "I paid

great attention to the improvement or application of my discourses. I remember, before I began to preach, a plain, judicious, serious man gave me the first suggestion that the application of a sermon is the most important part of it. I was struck with the truth of the observation, and resolved to retain and improve the advice. But when I began to write sermons, I found the application to be the most difficult, as well as most important, part of a discourse. But this, however, did not discourage me from endeavoring to attain this excellence in preaching. And in order to attain it, I found it necessary to digest my subject well before I formed the plan of the discourse, and in planning it, to have a supreme respect to the application. The last thing in execution should be the first in intention. The body of a discourse should be adapted to prepare the way for the improvement in which the speaker is to gain his ultimate end. And it ought to be his ultimate end in every sermon to make lasting impressions upon the hearts and consciences of his hearers. But this cannot be effected without applying what has been said in the body of the discourse to the peculiar state and character of both saints and sinners. The preacher ought to be acquainted with the peculiar views and feelings of all classes of men under all circumstances of life, and to construct his discourses so as to be able in the application to point them to every hearer's heart. Accordingly, I have made it my object to enter into the feelings of my people while composing and delivering my sermons."

Do not the laws of the new psychology verify the wisdom of this method of homiletic procedure as in harmony with the grain of our make, and so as effective in modern pulpit discourse?

DALE: After referring to Henry Ward Beecher's comment on Jonathan Edwards' preaching: "In the elaborate doctrinal part of his sermons the great preacher was only getting his guns into position; but in his 'applications' he opened fire on the enemy," Dr. Dale continues: "There are too many of us who take so much time in getting our guns 'into position,' that we have to finish without firing a shot. We say that we leave the truth to do its own work. We trust to the hearts and the consciences of our hearers to apply it. Depend upon it, this is a great and fatal mistake."

SCHOTT: "True eloquence has its triumph in the peroration."

SPURGEON: "The strongest part of all great sermons is the close. More depends on the last two minutes than on the first ten."

FULLER: "What, Why, What then."

GUTHRIE: "State, Prove, Paint, Persuade."

XII

BRASTOW: "The best free speech rests upon the manuscript. Writing has laid the foundation. Most preachers who have succeeded here have begun with the manuscript. Mr. Beecher and Dr. R. S. Storrs are examples."

ARCHBISHOP MAGEE: One of the greatest of England's extemporaneous preachers: "I never preach any sermon of which I have not written out a large part."

BOYD CARPENTER: "It is by thinking with the pen that you will find your way to the heart of your subject. No man can afford to do without his pen."

SPURGEON: "If you do not use the pen in other ways, you will be wise to write at least some of your sermons and revise them with great care. In any case write them out that you may be preserved from a slipshod style."

CUYLER: "If a young minister ever expects to be a vigorous, meaty, instructive, and enduring extempore preacher, he must first spend several years in carefully writing out his discourses."

PARKHURST: "Written preparation helps to secure the preacher against monotonousness of idea and monotonousness of expression. It encourages in him compactness of style. It affords him greater opportunity to put things in that pointed manner that will help to make them stick in the memory of the hearer. It helps to say more in the same length of time."

CICERO: "The best master of the orator is his pen."

XIII

AINSWORTH: "The words that leap to the lip of their own accord are the outcome of the real self a man has been fashioning all his life. The thing that responds

to the spur of the moment is the habit of years. There is nothing so historical in a man's life as his impromptus."

WILKINSON: "A truth that is worth remembering for some time after it has been said is almost always a truth that has been thought of for some time before it was said."

XIV

ROBINSON: "The key to success in unwritten speech is all in one word — preparation. I go over the points as the shuttle passes to and fro, until the mind travels as if by instinct. It is preparing for unwritten speech which has done more than anything else to make my hair gray and white. The man who thinks unwritten speech is easy is — is — a — well, in a single word, is a man of limited experience."

It has been said concerning the bearer of this personal testimony, President Ezekiel G. Robinson, that there has never been in this country a greater master of unwritten speech.

XV

JOWETT: "I need not remind you, after all I have said on the preacher in his study, that a heavenly frame of mind is the best interpreter of Scripture. Unless our study is also our oratory we shall have no visions. We shall be 'ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.' In these realms even hard work is fruitless, unless we have 'the fellowship of

the Holy Spirit.' But if our study be our sanctuary, 'the secret place of the Most High,' then the promise of ancient days shall be fulfilled in us, 'the eyes of them that see shall not be dimmed and the ears of them that hear shall hearken'; and the work of the Lord shall have free course and be glorified."

XVI

JEFFERSON: "No question should be oftener on the preacher's lips than 'To what purpose is this?' That is the question with which he should begin every sermon. On the first page he should write in clean, terse Saxon the precise work which this particular sermon is intended to do; and on the last page he should write his honest answer to the question: 'Is this sermon so constructed as to be likely to accomplish the result for which it has been written?'"

ABBOTT: "I soon learned what I regard as the first essential of an effective sermon. It must be addressed *to* a congregation, not an essay *about* a theme. It must be addressed primarily not to the intellect, but to the will, and in this respect it differs from a lecture, which is addressed primarily not to the will but to the intellect. It is like a lawyer's speech to a jury, not like a professor's lecture to a class. The minister should never ask himself, What theme interests me? but, What theme will profit my congregation? He should be able to answer to himself the question: What do I want to say to this people at this time, and why do I want to say it? The first requisite of a good

sermon, therefore, is a clearly defined object, and this object, in the preacher's mind, should determine his choice of a subject. When this simple but fundamental truth first dawned upon me I was humiliated to find how many sermons I was preaching without a well-defined object. And to cure this defect I began to write down in my sermon notebook before the theme or the text the object which led me to select them both."

STORRS: "Make themes your means for reaching persons."

XVII

A. P. PEABODY: "Write as rapidly as you can without being careless. The more rapidly you write the more likely you are to write short sentences, to avoid circumlocutions and parentheses, and to express yourself so that you can be understood. But do your thinking very deliberately, and have it all done before you begin to write."

GENUNG: "To write both well and rapidly is a desirable accomplishment; but let the writer at all events seek to write well, never letting any ill-considered or careless work escape him; and then if by practice and experience rapidity also comes, it is worth something. The motto of the late George Ripley who, it is said, made his use of the English language a matter of conscience, ought to be always in the writer's heart: 'He who does not write as well as he can on every occasion will soon form the habit of not writing well at all.' "

XVIII

MacLaren: "We can scarcely realize what this preaching — intense, searching, impressive, uplifting — of MacLaren meant to him, — what an expenditure of all the forces of his being — body, mind, and spirit. Early in his ministry he spoke of each Sunday's service as a 'woe.' This feeling continued through his life, and only those who were with him when he was anticipating, not only special services, but his weekly preparation for his own pulpit can know the tear and wear of spirit which that preparation involved. In retrospect it seems little short of a miracle that his life of strenuous preparation for each sermon preached was continued for nearly sixty years."

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